

HEART OF VARRUL



SPAHN²



HEART OF VARRUL

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Edition*™

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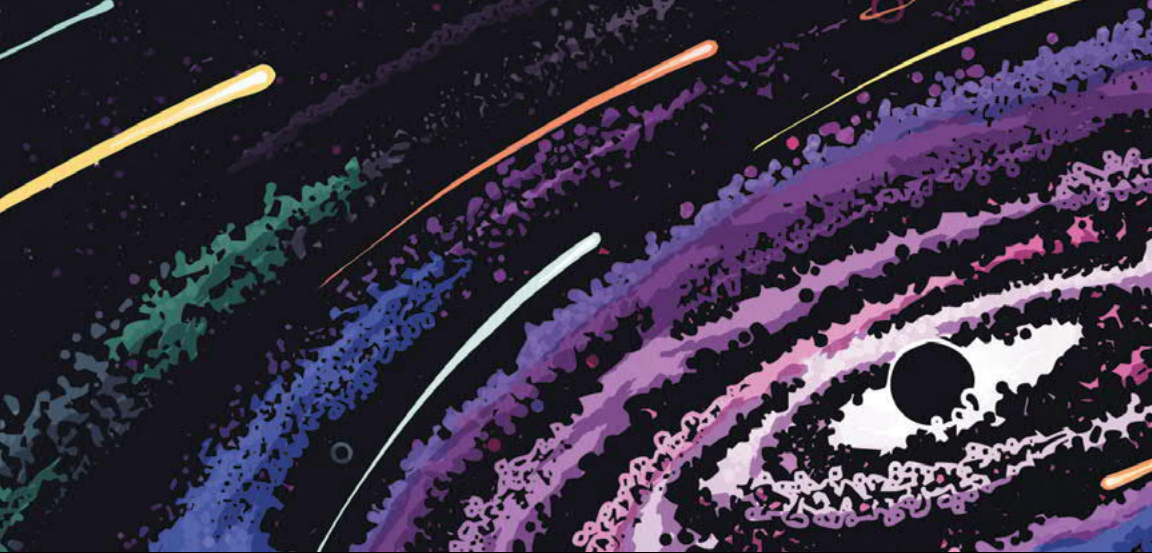
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INTRODUCTION

Heart of Varrul is a *White Star: Galaxy Edition*™ setting sourcebook designed for three to six characters of any level—it is up to the Referee to tailor adventures to match the capabilities of the characters. *Heart of Varrul* takes place in the far reaches of the Galactic Beyond so it can be dropped into any existing campaign with little fuss. The sourcebook supports almost any kind of adventure, so a good mixture of classes is recommended.

The book is set during the time of the Interstellar Upheaval, with heroic members of the Restoration waging a guerilla war against the unstoppable juggernaut of the Galactic Consortium. The goal of the Restoration is to liberate all oppressed planets and restore order and democracy to the people of the Unified Systems. This comes at a high cost in resources and lives.

Enter Varrulium. This new energy-resistant ore has recently been discovered on the far distant Planet Varrul, offering untold riches to those brave enough to make the journey. How and why the characters travel to Varrul is left for the Referee to decide. They may be freedom fighters of the Restoration, dark agents of the Consortium, or just free traders and entrepreneurs trying to eke out a living on the fringes of galactic civilization.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Heart of Varrul is intended as an open-ended sandbox centered around an interstellar “gold rush” so there is a definite “Space Western” vibe going on here. Information in this book is presented in the order to which a newcomer to Varrul would be expected to learn it. The information starts with a typical trip to a new frontier world, however, there is more to the planet than meets the eye.

- The characters must first face the hazards of the Rul System as they dodge asteroids, solar flares, pirates, and space monsters on their way to Planet Varrul.
- The characters enter the hazardous atmosphere of Planet Varrul—an enormous gas giant that does not conform to normal scientific laws.
- The characters arrive at the orbiting Tathkee Station to refuel, resupply, and learn the lay of the land. Tathkee Station is the only functioning space station on the planet and is meant to be the source of countless adventures. It is here that the PCs can learn all about the Varrulium mining trade and the planet’s various dangers.
- The characters begin exploration of the gas giant Varrul, whether as miners, mercenaries, or pioneers. This leads to encounters with the planet’s dangerous wildlife, including swarms of hostile Tikatikatik insects.
- The characters discover the Tikatikatik are more than just dangerous predators—they are a race of sentient beings with their own unique culture, outlook, and history. The mining industry is disrupting their way of life and they have been left with no choice except to fight back. What the PCs do with this knowledge is up to them.
- The characters journey to the planet’s Core—the *Heart of Varrul*—from which no offworlder has ever returned. There they learn the true nature of Planet Varrul and the danger this secret poses to the rest of the universe.

ADVENTURING ON VARRUL

Heart of Varrul is a self-contained setting that is designed to kick off a long-term campaign. Each of the bullet points listed above can provide countless hours of adventure, so there’s no need to hurry the PCs on to the next chapter.

The Referee should prepare the characters for an extended trip to the Rul System, with adventures set in space, aboard Tathkee Station, in the skies of Varrul, and eventually on the planet’s rocky Core.

The Referee should take time to become familiar with the common features of Varrul. Random encounters, plot hooks, and adventure ideas featured in this book demonstrate only a few of the types of adventures that can be undertaken on Planet Varrul.

NEW GAME CONCEPTS

Heart of Varrul introduces a few new game concepts into the mix and standardizes several others.

DICE ROLLS

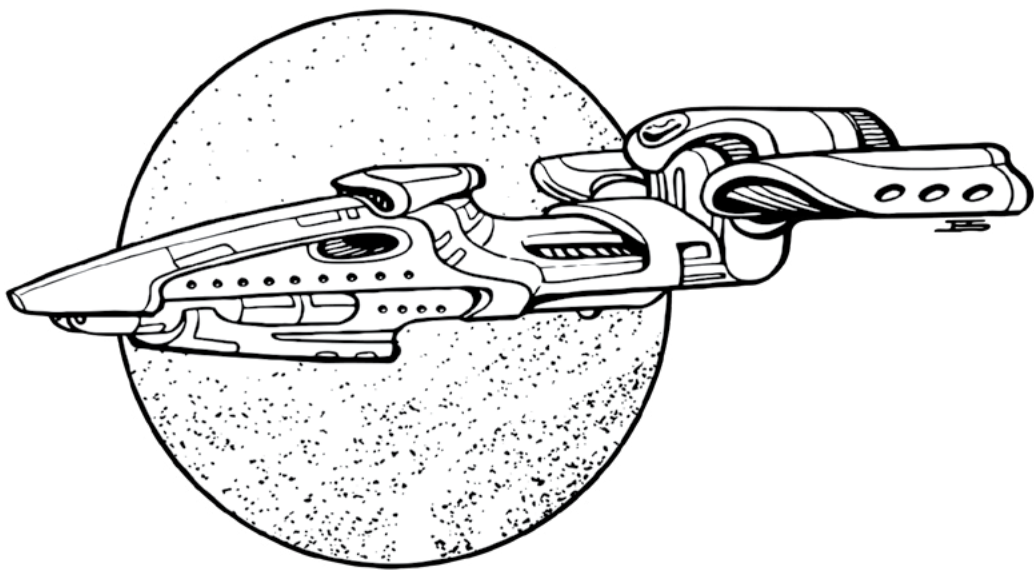
- The following nonstandard die rolls are sometimes called for in the text:
- 1d2 is obtained by rolling 1d6 and dividing the result by three (round up).
- 1d3 is obtained by rolling 1d6 and dividing the result by two (round up).
- 1d10 is obtained by rolling 1d20 and dividing the result by two (round up).

SKILL CHECKS

Heart of Varrul makes official use of the skill system presented in the *Skills (Optional)* section of **CHAPTER TWO: CLASSES AND SKILLS** of *White Star: Galaxy Edition™*.

If a character does not possess a particular skill, and the Referee believes that anyone should be able to attempt the desired task (such as using the Athletics skill to jump across a ventilation shaft), the character must roll a “1” on 1d10 to succeed. Normal modifiers still apply.

Note: If the Referee prefers not to use skills, descriptive actions, Saving Throws, Ability Checks, or some other form of task resolution may be introduced.





CHAPTER

0001

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

The Unified Systems Calendar (USC) is the primary method of keeping track of time in the civilized universe. However, as is standard corporate practice for exploitable worlds, days on Varrul are numbered from the moment the business opportunity first presented itself. These are known as Varrul Days or V-Days for short.

V001 FIRST CONTACT

A band of mercenaries known as the Kulsta Lormbreakers flees a conflict in the Hwwaloth System after suffering heavy losses.

The Lormbreakers arrive in the Rul System after an FTL mishap. They land on one of Planet Varrul's floating islands and discover the energy-resistant Varrulium ore. The native Tikatikatik attack the outnumbered Lormbreakers and drive them from the planet.

The Lormbreakers leave the Rul System with a small amount of Varrulium and other items to sell.

V042 THE RUSH BEGINS

The Varrulium ore is tested and auctioned off. Word of its properties quickly spreads. Corporations, governments, and independent investors outfit themselves and head for the planet in force.

V099 SPACE STATION ARRIVALS

Ingan “Old Man” Tathkee is among this first wave of entrepreneurs. His space station (Tathkee Station) is one of three (along with Tel-Gavari and Hamplo Station) that make it through the Rul Asteroid Cluster and enter low orbit around the planet as mining operations commence across Varrul.

V107 TEL-GAVARI DOWN

The Tel-Gavari Industries Corporate Station and Refinery is raked by ion strikes and plasma storms. Its administrator manages to hold the station together until most of the escape pods have jettisoned. The station then plummets down into Varrul’s cloudy skies as ionic lightning crackles along its hull.

V112 MERCENARIES NEEDED

Deadly encounters with the planet’s native wildlife increase, overwhelming the unprepared corporate security forces. A call for independent contractors goes out and mercenary companies begin arriving to ply their trade. There is no lack of work for those handy with a gun and blade.

V114 THE NOOLON I EVENT

An enormous Noolon, Inc. mining vessel and refinery ship enters Varrul’s orbit. Ignoring all warnings, it plunges into the Middle Atmosphere, headed towards the planet’s core and is quickly torn apart by plasma storms and ion strikes. Thousands of crewmen, miners, and mercenaries perish in the event.

V119 HAMPLO STATION DOWN

Hamplo Station is hit by a violent plasma storm that damages its main reactor. The station spirals out of control as explosions rock its hull. Thousands die, and tons of wreckage plummets down into the depths of Varrul’s cloudy skies.

V120 TATHKEE STATION HOLDS

Tathkee Station is the only suborbital station to avoid the effects of Varrul’s atmosphere. It quickly becomes the hub of all traffic on Planet Varrul.

V184 THE NOOLAN II EVENT

Noolon, Inc. sends a second, larger mining vessel with heavier shielding, manned entirely by robots to Varrul. The results are the same. A correlation is noted between this second event and a change in atmospheric conditions—an increased number of plasma storms and ion strikes rip through the skies, causing death and destruction at numerous independent mining operations.

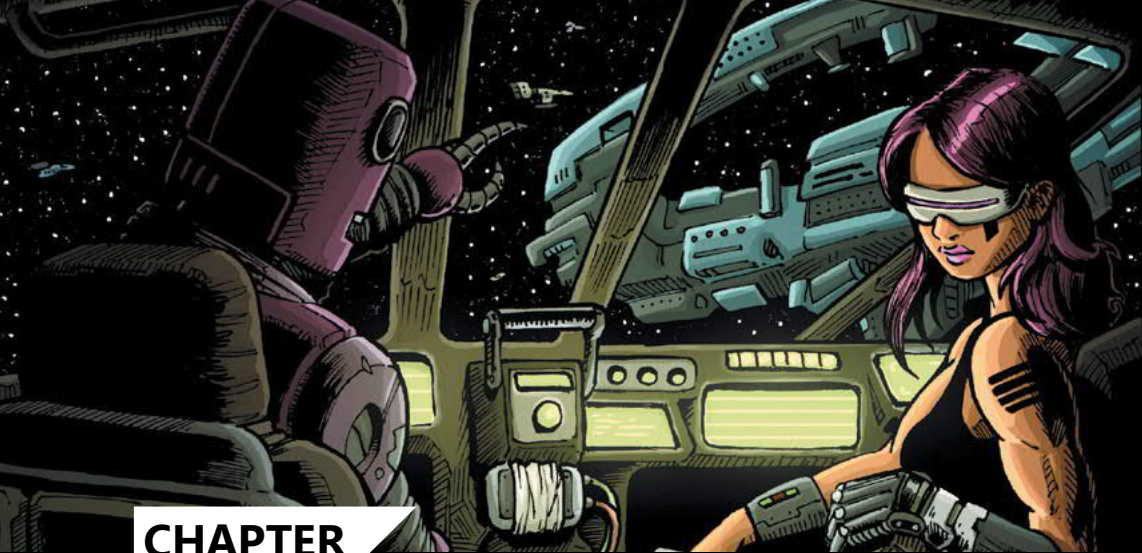
V214 BUG SWARMS

Large swarms of native “Bugs” descend on several sky ranches and mining operations in what appears to be a coordinated attack. Hundreds are killed. The attack triggers outrage among the sky ranchers and miners, and steps to eliminate the Bug threat are proposed.

V250 PRESENT DAY

The PCs arrive in the Rul System at the height of the Varrulium Rush. Fortune and adventure await!





CHAPTER

0002

THE RUL SYSTEM

The Rul System lies far beyond the edge of the known universe in the area of deep space known as the Galactic Beyond.

Ancient census records from the early days of the Unified Systems note that the Rul System once contained five planets inhabited by a race of beings known as the Rulloth. It now consists of a single gas giant orbiting an enormous red sun, with no trace of Rulloth culture remaining.

The system is highly unstable and filled with asteroids, ion fluctuations, magnetic storms, and solar flares, making space travel difficult and dangerous.

RUL NEBULA

The Rul Nebula is an interstellar cloud that encompasses most of the Rul System, including the Rul Sun, the Rul Asteroid Cluster, and the solitary Planet Varrul.

RUL ASTEROID CLUSTER

This giant asteroid field is made of the remnants of the five planets that once occupied the Rul System. The circumstances surrounding their destruction have been lost to history. The cluster is denser in some places than others and filled with asteroids and space debris. Abandoned Rulloth outposts, forgotten military, bases, and remnants of other alien civilizations are said to be hidden on asteroids throughout the cluster.

PLANET VARRUL

Varrul is an enormous gas giant, almost a dwarf star, located in the heart of the Rul Nebula. Its atmosphere is a hot and humid mixture of ammonia, methane, helium, hydrogen, and other volatile gases that are toxic to many lifeforms. The skies of Varrul roil with magnetic fluctuations, superheated plasma storms, and bolts of charged ions that wreak havoc on even the most heavily shielded systems.

HAZARDS OF THE RUL SYSTEM

The Rul System is a difficult and dangerous place to traverse. Magnetic interference, ion clouds, solar flares, and rogue asteroids present constant dangers to intrepid explorers. Listed below are just a few of these concerns.

SUBLIGHT TRAVEL

The nearest safe jump point is located at the edge of the Rul Nebula. It has been nicknamed V-Space. A few mobile mining stations and refineries float through V-Space, awaiting shipments of ore from Planet Varrul.

It takes four (4) to six (6) weeks of slow sublight travel to reach Planet Varrul from V-Space. Starships often band together in long caravans to make the journey, helping each other fight off pirates or assisting one another if their vessels become disabled by asteroids, ionic interference, or other mishaps.

FASTER THAN LIGHT

Faster-than-light (FTL) travel is extremely dangerous inside the Rul System.

If an FTL drive is activated within the Rul Nebula, the ship automatically suffers 3d6 damage as well as a Minor, Moderate, and Major Damage Effect as per the [House Rule: Damage Report](#) table in **CHAPTER SIX: STARSHIPS & STARSHIP COMBAT** of *White Star: Galaxy Edition*™.

SENSORS AND COMMS

Magnetic interference, solar flares, and ionic clouds severely restrict sensor readings and communication within the Rul System.

Long range communication (with those outside of the system) is impossible.

Short range communication (within the system) is scrambled, with audio and video transmissions being distorted and data lost during transfers.

Shipboard communication is unaffected, unless the Referee decides otherwise.

Sensor readings suffer massive amounts of interference, becoming completely scrambled at a range of more than one hundred (100) yards.

Rul System

Asteroids

Rul Sun

Asteroids

Asteroids

Varrul

WEAPONS AND SHIELDS

A starship's shield generator works normally. However, because of the interference, shipboard weapons do not gain the benefit of Targeting. The ship's computers simply cannot lock onto targets with any degree of accuracy.

ASTEROIDS

Asteroids from the Rul Asteroid Cluster float throughout the Rul Nebula. They can be charted and avoided by most vessels traveling to Varrul, as long as the pilot moves slowly (1/3 normal speed). Even so, there is a 1 in 20 chance per trip that an asteroid propelled by a random magnetic surge strikes the passing vessel for 3d6 damage. The pilot of a small vessel (light transport, scout ship, stunt fighter, etc.) may make a Saving Throw to take evasive maneuvers and suffer only 1/2 damage.

Faster movement, or exploration of denser parts of the Rul Asteroid Cluster, is much trickier. The Referee must determine whether the explored area is Light, Moderate, or Dense. Each round that a starship flies through the cluster, the pilot must make a Navigation Check.

If the Check fails, the starship collides with an asteroid and the vessel suffers 6d6 (Light), 8d6 (Moderate), or 10d6 (Dense) damage and suffers a Minor (Light), Moderate (Moderate), or Major (Dense) Damage Effect per the House Rule: Damage Report table in **CHAPTER SIX: STARSHIPS & STARSHIP COMBAT** of *White Star: Galaxy Edition*™.

Flying through a Light asteroid cluster grants a +1 bonus to the Navigation Check, while flying through a Dense cluster inflicts a -1 penalty. Pilots, Star Pilots, and other similar classes receive an additional +1 bonus to this check.

Combat is also hampered in the Rul Asteroid Cluster. All attacks suffer a -2 penalty when made in a Light, -4 penalty in a Moderate, and -6 penalty in a Dense asteroid cluster.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (THE RUL SYSTEM)

The Referee is free to reduce travel through the Rul System to a handful of die rolls. However, the system itself can be a source of adventure, with encounters that might affect or foreshadow events to come. The following encounters assume the PCs are making the four (4) to six (6) month trip from V-Space to Varrul.

1. ASTRAL STORMLING: An Astral Stormling is the larger cousin of the Stormling. Astral Stormlings feed on electrical discharges and ionic energy common to the Rul Nebula. This Astral Stormling becomes enraged when the PC vessel passes through the large pink cloud that makes up its "body". The Astral Stormling begins following the PC vessel, delivering one (1) lightning attack every hour for the next twenty-four (24) hours.

Any character who makes a Knowledge Check or Survival Check realizes that the pink cloud following behind is an Astral Stormling. The Astral

Stormling is immune to normal starship laser attacks.

A Technology Check is required to recalibrate the lasers to affect the Astral Stormling. The Technology Check may be made once per hour until successful. A Freed Assimilant, Novomachina, Robot (Mechanical), Two-Fisted Technician, or Uttin can automatically recalibrate the lasers without the need for a Technology Check.

The Astral Stormling breaks off the attack if it takes any damage.

Astral Stormling: AC 6 [13] (natural); HD 9; hp 45; AT 1 (lightning); THB +9; SA Flight, Immune to Physical Attacks, Starship Creature; ST 10; MV 12; XP 9/1,100.

2. BODIES IN SPACE: The PC vessel encounters dozens of dead bodies floating in space. The bodies belong to miners wearing uniforms of the now-bankrupt Proto-Drive Solutions (PDS). The corpses have been horribly mutilated, with gouged eyes, ritual cut marks, missing limbs, and severed fingers. More than a few appear to have been gnawed upon.

This gruesome discovery looks to be the work of Space Raiders. It was actually done by members of the anti-expansionist organization known as Alien Aware. The Alien Aware activists are protesting the exploitation of Varrul's resources. They sabotaged the life support system on the PDS transport ship, killing over one-hundred crewmembers, miners, and support staff, and then defiled the bodies. They are hoping the rumor of Space Raiders might deter further offworld invasion of Varrul.

A Survival Check reveals a bloody Cremlite pawprint belonging to an Alien Aware cell leader named Davus Ulgull,

3. CRYSTAL CAVES: The characters see a strange sparkle on a passing asteroid. The sparkle comes from a small crystal cave complex. Any character who Walks in the Way feels drawn to these caves.

The crystal caves are the remnants of an ancient Rulloth outpost. A broken crystaltech holographic projector inside the caves replays a scene depicting a fleet of crystalline starships fleeing a lush green planet. The planet is Rul, just prior to its destruction (see CHAPTER 0014: TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA).

4. DERELICT VESSEL: The wreck of a space yacht named the *Shade Polaris* tumbles aimlessly through the asteroid field. Its hull is scorched by laser blasts, and pitted and distorted by collisions with asteroids. The interior is spattered with dried blood.

The *Shade Polaris* belonged to a wealthy nobleman named Prince Kees Standor from the planet Elalun Vector. It was attacked and boarded by Dengakiin pirates who slaughtered everyone in sight. Kees and three (3) crewmembers managed to flee the attack in an escape pod.

The wrecked yacht has been stripped of electronics and anything of value. It can be recovered as salvage worth 1,800 ic. If the characters make a Technology Check with a -1 penalty, they locate a coded distress beacon that leads them to the escape pod. If rescued, the charming young prince

rewards the characters with 1,000 ic each and may attempt to hire them later as bodyguards, gala escorts, or planetary guides.

Prince Standor Kees (1st-level Human Male Aristocrat): AC 8 [11] (energy cloak); HD 1; hp 6; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Cha 15, Interaction 2, Athletics 2, Knowledge 1, Powerful Speaker, Silver Tongue; ST 14; MV 12; XP 1/15; laser pistol, holdout laser, dagger, clothing (fine outfit), jewelry worth 2,500 ic.

Crewmember (3) (Assorted Alien Species): AC 8 [11] (flight suit); HD 1-1; hp 3; THB +0; AT 1 (weapon); SA Referee's Discretion; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/10.

5. DISTRESS BEACON: The characters pick up a weak distress beacon coming from the space suit of a dead pilot drifting in open space. The pilot's name was Reppan Wyli. He was a corporate spy for Synthlife Industries whose ship was destroyed by a Gundarran Mining Corporation (GMINCO) security team on its way to Varrul. Wyli bailed out and managed to escape, but died alone in space a few weeks ago.

A secret compartment in his space suit holds a coded data chip containing the "go ahead" to sabotage GMINCO Mining Junkers. It also contains the names of several saboteurs on Tathkee Station. This chip would be worth 10,000 ic to the Gundarran Mining Corporation.

6. MAKE WAY!: Mantle Crack Industries (MCI) is a mining company known for using brute force tactics to strip-mine planets. The company has armed a fleet of six (6) Kordok Landers (see CHAPTER 0009: NEW STARSHIPS AND VEHICLES) with heavy lasers and proton missiles designed to blast their way through the Rul Asteroid Cluster. The fleet is headed straight for the PC vessel!

The PC pilot must make a Saving Throw to avoid taking 5d6 damage from the blasts. The questionable tactic throws the cluster into disarray, with stray asteroid fragments turning the route between V-Space and Varrul into a Dense cluster for weeks.

Only two (2) of the Kordok Landers make it all the way to Varrul intact. The other four (4) are lost to asteroid impacts and ion strikes somewhere along the way. The PCs may undertake salvage and rescue operations later, at the Referee's discretion.

7. MINE TRAP: A band of pirates named the Kiffin-6 has littered this part of the asteroid field with Ion Mines. The pilot of the PC vessel must make a Saving Throw each round for the next three (3) rounds. Each failure means the PC vessel is struck by 1d6 Ion Charges, causing 2d6 damage and reducing the ships Movement by one (1).

If struck by an Ion Mine, a recorded transmission from the pirate captain comes across the ship's comms:

"This is Captain Larres Kiffin of the Kiffin-6. I order you to stand down and

prepare to be boarded. If you submit, you will be freed unharmed. If you resist, you will be killed.”

The Kiffin-6 pirates were killed last month by a Gundarran Mining Corporation escort, so the PCs are in no danger of imminent attack.

8. SOLAR FLARE: Radiation from a sudden solar flare washes over the characters’ starship, frying circuits and rendering one of its systems inoperable. Roll 1d6 to see which system is affected: 1-2 Weapon (Referee’s choice), 3-4 Targeting, 5-6 Shield Strength. A Pilot or Mechanical Robot can Jury-Rig the damaged circuits, but full repairs can only be made in a proper repair bay.

9. SPACE PIRATES: A band of space pirates known as Jallikan’s Reavers has captured a medium transport named the *Costen*, which was bound for Varrul. The pirates have boarded the *Costen*, killed several crewmembers, and are holding the rest hostage while they empty the vessel’s cargo into their light transport.

Ionic interference in this sector makes it impossible for the pirates to detect the approach of the PC vessel. If confronted, the pirates threaten to execute hostages. The pirate vessel is docked with the *Costen*, so any attack with starship weapons splits the damage between both vessels. If the PCs want to save the *Costen*’s crew, they must conduct a boarding operation. Jallikan’s Reavers surrender if more than half (1/2) of their number are killed or incapacitated.

Gartnoth-class Medium Transport (*Costen*): Starship; AC 7 [12]; hp 75; SS 3; TAR +0; AT Light Laser (2d6) [pilot-linked]; MOD FTL Drive; MV 6.

Sintar9-class Light Transport (*Jallikan’s Blade*): Starship; AC 6 [13]; hp 60; SS 0; TAR +0; AT Light Laser x3 (2d6), Ion Charges x2 (2d6); MOD FTL Drive, Ion Charge (2); MV 9. The pirate vessel contains stolen electronics, weapons, and supplies worth 1,200 ic.

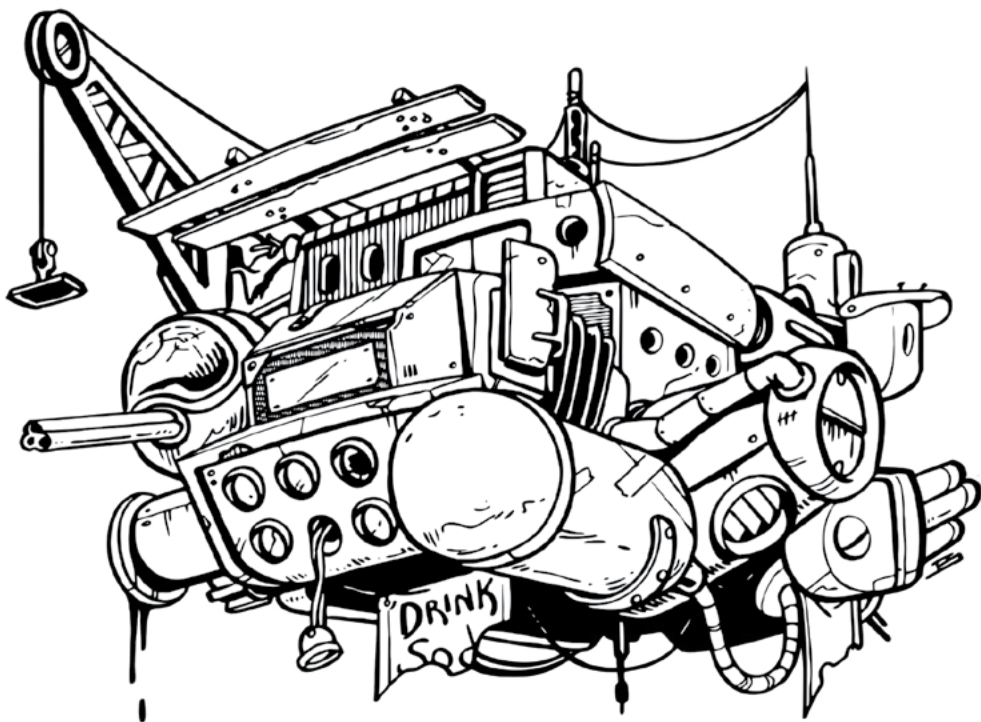
Dogo Jallikan (1st-level Human Male Mercenary): AC 5 [14] (medium armor); HD 1+1; hp 6; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +0; SA Navigation 2, Athletics 2, Technology 1, Combat Machine, Weapon Specialist (laser rifle); ST 14; MV 12; XP 1/20; laser rifle, laser pistol, dagger.

Jallikan’s Reavers (10): AC 7 [12] (light armor); HD 1; hp 4; THB +0; AT 1 (weapon); SA Referee’s Discretion; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; light armor, laser rifle, laser pistol, sword, spear, dagger.

***Costen* Crewmember (16) (Assorted Alien Species):** AC 8 [11] (flight suit); HD 1-1; hp 3; THB +0; AT 1 (weapon); SA Referee’s Discretion; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/10.

10. STOWAWAY: A young girl named Kiara Relson stows away aboard the characters' vessel. Kiara's parents were killed in a Consortium crackdown on the farming planet of Agrari VII, and she has been on the run ever since. The spunky Kiara is traveling to Varrul to make her fortune. She is young and impetuous, and prone to all manner of hijinks. If Kiara endears herself to the PCs, she may stay on and become part of the crew.

Kiara Relson (1st-level Human Female Plucky Sidekick): AC 8 [11] (Dex); HD 1; hp 5; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +0; SA Dex 17, Athletics 2, Larceny 2, Technology 1, Go Get 'Em Kid, I Believe in You; ST 14; MV 12; XP 1/15; laser pistol (2), dagger, hoverboard (skytopus decoration), toolkit, holographic picture of parents.





CHAPTER

0003

PLANET VARRUL PRIMER

Varrul is a gas giant full of toxic gases and violent storms. Islands of porous rock float through these turbulent skies, and a number of hostile native creatures call Varrul home. The planet's atmosphere is the subject of intense debate, with most frontier scientists and explorers agreeing that it does not adhere to normal scientific laws.

Offworlders have recently come to Varrul to mine precious Varrulium ore. The planet's primary spaceport is a private station named Tathkee Station, which hovers in low orbit above the planet. Varrul's remote location, unstable atmosphere, and skies filled with deadly flying predators have made large-scale mining operations difficult. Still, the lure of free wealth has brought travelers from as far away as the Galactic Center.

PLANETARY LAYOUT

Varrul is divided into three levels—the Upper Atmosphere, Middle Atmosphere, and Lower Atmosphere. These levels were identified by Gundarran Mining Corporation surveyors and have been accepted as the standard. However, the planet's Lower Atmosphere is based entirely on conjecture; no one has ever returned from the depths of Varrul's skies, so reliable data does not exist.

CYCLES

There is no true night or day on Varrul as it orbits the Rul Sun. Instead, each

day consists of three (3) ten-hour cycles that are marked by subtle changes in the sky's color. The change between colors is gradual, starting with light pink in the morning, deepening to red by the afternoon, and darkening to purple in the evening.

UPPER ATMOSPHERE

The Upper Atmosphere encircles the highest level of the planet. It is peaceful and serene, with cloudy skies of red, purple, and blue. Gravity here is slightly lighter than normal (Prime Standard). The Upper Atmosphere is largely free from the worst of the violent storms that swirl below.

The air here is breathable, but ultimately poisonous to most non-native lifeforms, causing weakness and death over the course of several months unless the exposure is treated. Most offworlders in the Upper Atmosphere wear breathing masks or keep them handy.

Ion strikes, magnetic surges, and pockets of flammable gas make technological devices (starships, sensors, weapons, etc.) extremely unreliable and even dangerous to operate. Tathkee Station and numerous small floating islands drift throughout the Upper Atmosphere.

MIDDLE ATMOSPHERE

The Middle Atmosphere is a swirling mass of toxic clouds, poison gases, ion strikes, and violent storms. These storms produce rains of superheated plasma that can burn through hulls and ionic lightning that can fry the circuits of even the most heavily shielded systems.

Islands of porous gray rock float along invisible magnetic waves throughout the Middle Atmosphere, and a number of native alien lifeforms prowl its turbulent skies. The most dangerous of these are the "Bugs" (Tikatikatik) that travel in swarms and attack anything in sight.

The wreckage of derelict ships and spacecraft also float along the magnetic tides of the Middle Atmosphere.

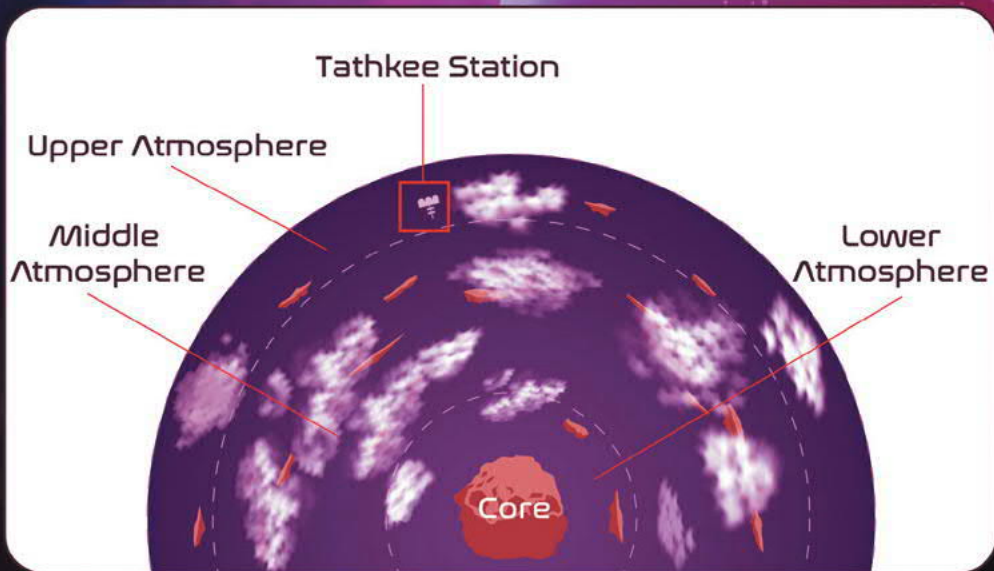
LOWER ATMOSPHERE AND THE PLANET'S CORE

The Lower Atmosphere is believed to surround the planet's Core. Its skies are thought to resemble those of the Middle Atmosphere, filled with floating islands, poisonous gases, and frequent storms.

The Core itself is the subject of wild speculation. Known to some as the *Heart of Varrul*, most miners believe it is made of pure Varrulium, just lying there for the taking. Some surveyors argue it is a ball of molten liquid, while others insist the Core may be an artificial construct, which would explain some of Varrul's quirky planetary features.

To date, no off-worlder has ever returned from a trip to the Core.

VARRUL







SECURITY AND LAWS

Tathkee Station nominally upholds Intergalactic Law through an arrest and trial system, but security's first priority is to Ingan Tathkee and the welfare of the station. The Station Security Robots (SSRs) maintain a semblance of public order, but what is done behind closed doors and in darkened hallways is rarely questioned.

Tathkee Station Security is monitored by an artificial intelligence known as JEN (Julon Evolved Nexus) whose awareness extends throughout the station. The station's antiquated security camera network is easily bypassed. However, JEN has installed hidden sensors and recorders throughout the station to help prevent crime and monitor illicit dealings.

Security Chief Max Olthan is a cybernetic human who oversees a corps of competent Station Security Robots. He assists JEN with investigations and handles the daily security tasks of the station. Chief Olthan answers only to Ingan Tathkee.

ARREST

Station Security Robots (SSRs) are authorized to arrest any occupant of Tathkee Station suspected of committing a crime. Arrestees are detained in electrified handcuffs (or other appropriate restraints, depending on their alien physiology) and brought to the Security Center below deck where they are held until trial. JEN and Security Chief Olthan are immediately made aware of any arrests.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

Most arrests are made at the scene of the crime or shortly thereafter. Station Security is sometimes called upon to conduct criminal investigations. These investigations are usually overseen by Chief Olthan, but several SSRs with detective subroutines are also capable of collecting and analyzing evidence.

A station investigation usually involves serious offenses like a string of unsolved murders, terrorist actions, acts of piracy, or major disruptions to station commerce. Otherwise, influential people, vested interests, or suitable "donations" are needed to get Station Security to open an investigation.



TYPICAL CRIMES

The following crimes are common aboard Tathkee Station.

DISTURBING THE PEACE

This crime is a catchall that effectively allows the SSRs to arrest anyone doing anything out of the ordinary. Typical arrests for Disturbing the Peace include reckless skyboarding, public drunkenness, weapons discharge, and general rowdiness. This charge is commonly referred to as P.O.S. or “Pissing Off Security”.

THEFT

Theft includes theft of property or services. Theft is common in all levels of Tathkee Station society. Typical theft arrests include pickpocketing, “dine and dash”, grand theft skycraft or starship (GTS), and burglary. Fraud, forgery, and embezzlements are also considered forms of theft, but are rarely investigated unless commerce is largely affected. Possession of fake Tathkee Station staff identification or unauthorized use of station identification or access codes is considered theft and most likely results in expulsion from the station.

DAMAGES

Damages include physical damages to people, property, or services. Typical charges include arrests for collateral damage from errant laser blasts, barroom brawls, vandalism, or illegally tampering with a robot’s programming (including an SSR).

ASSAULT

Assault includes threats or acts involving physical violence. Typical Assault arrests occur during brawls, however, obstruction of an SSR is also considered an Assault. Assault with a weapon carries heavier fines and penalties. A sanctioned Duel (see below) is not considered an Assault. Claims of self-defense are investigated on the scene by Station Security (usually through data recordings and/or eyewitness accounts) and declared either founded or unfounded.

ROBBERY

Robbery is considered theft by force or threat of force. It contains elements of both Theft and Assault and is therefore a more serious offense. Extortion and blackmail are also considered forms of Robbery, although these crimes may be more difficult to prove.

MURDER

Murder involves the act of willingly attempting to kill or killing another sentient lifeform. Ingan Tathkee has extended this to include robots with

true artificial intelligence (such as any PC robots). Claims of self-defense are investigated on the scene by Tathkee Station Security (usually through data recordings and/or eyewitness accounts), although lengthier investigations may be needed.

PIRACY

Piracy is the only enforceable crime that occurs outside the station. On Varrul, it usually involves the theft of Varrulium. The lack of adequate sensors and communications devices on Varrul makes Piracy hard to prove. Credible eyewitness accounts and data recordings are usually needed to obtain a conviction. Pirates are the bane of decent folk living along the Galactic Edge and the Galactic Beyond, and the punishment for Piracy is always death by execution or public execution.

TRIAL AND PUNISHMENT

A venerable Consortium Zhuudan (judge) named Braddus G. Wygrath a.k.a. "The Black Judge" holds court twice per month in the Sterling Court. Court may convene early for special cases or upon Ingan Tathkee's request. It is in Ingan Tathkee's best interests to maintain a semblance of public order, so bribes are rarely if ever accepted.

Typical Punishments consist of Fines, Restitution, and Forced Labor (see below). Punishments may also be meted out by Street Justice or Duels, or settled in Backroom Deals. Executions and Public Executions are reserved for the most heinous of crimes.

TYPES OF PUNISHMENT

The following forms of punishment may be meted out on Tathkee Station.

FINES

Fines are arbitrary amounts that may be raised or lowered on the Zhuudan's whim. Fines that cannot be paid, automatically convert the sentence to Forced Labor.

RESTITUTION

Restitution is sometimes required, particularly if the offender caused damages to the victim or his property. Restitution includes such things as reimbursement of medical bills, replacement of damaged property, and/or payment for loss of business or theft of services.

STREET JUSTICE

Street Justice occurs when one or more residents of Tathkee Station take it upon themselves to violently punish criminals on the scene at the time of the perpetrated crime. Punishments range from physical beatings to serious

QUICK DRAW DUELS

"I'm calling you out. Draw, if'n y' ain't yella'."

Tathkee Plaza. Two men. One street. The blink of an eye followed by the blast of a laser. A long silence, and then the crowd erupts in cheers. Justice has been served.

Along the Galactic Edge, there are two kinds of gunmen—the quick and the dead. The only way to really determine who is quick and who is dead is a Quick Draw Duel. But there's a lot more to it than just two intergalactic hombres steppin' into the street and skinnin' their heat wagons. A Quick Draw Duel has several steps and is as much a test of the gunslinger's gumption as it is his speed.

Step One: The Call Out

A Quick Draw Duel begins with a formal challenge from one gunfighter to another. This is known as the Call Out. It can be as blatant as one approaching the other and quite literally saying "I'm callin' you out" in front of a crowd, but sometimes it's more subtle, like when both gunfighters simply look at each other and nod—they know the challenge has been issued and accepted, and it won't be settled until one of them is dead.

Though player characters can call out NPCs whenever they wish, the Referee is the final arbiter of whether or not the Call Out is accepted. Once a Call Out has been issued, both the challenger and the challenged must make a Saving Throw (plus or minus any Wisdom modifiers).

Mercenaries and Alien Brutes receive a +1 bonus to this roll. Bounty Hunters and Men of Tomorrow receive a +2 bonus to the roll. Gunslinger's and Jack of Stars receive a +3 bonus to the roll. Other modifiers may apply, based on what's at stake and how well the scene is roleplayed.

If the Quick Draw Duel doesn't occur immediately, the Call Out is typically when the time and place of the fight is named.

A successful Saving Throw adds +1d6 to the gunfighter's Quick Draw Initiative. The Quick Draw Duel then moves into Step Two: The Crowd.

Step Two: The Crowd

Quick Draw Duels rarely take place privately. They tend to occur out on the street, in the open—a public display of blood and speed. The witnesses to both the Call Out and the Draw itself have a subtle impact on the Duel. If the Crowd strongly supports one gunfighter over the other, their subconscious hope in their champion's victory can actually grant him a benefit during the duel.

If the Quick Draw Duel doesn't occur immediately after the Call Out, both challenger and challenged can attempt to sway the Crowd to their side. This is

done through roleplaying and thematic actions. A heroic gunfighter might try to convince the Crowd that the time has come to end the rule of a villainous murderer, while a dastardly gunslinger might bribe or intimidate the Crowd into supporting him.

Just before Step Three: The Staredown begins, each gunfighter makes a Saving Throw (plus or minus any Charisma modifiers). Based on their actions, they may receive anywhere from a -2 to a +2 modifier to this roll. If the Saving Throw is successful, the gunfighter adds +1d6 to his Quick Draw Initiative.

Step Three: The Staredown

The Quick Draw Duel is fought in the mind as much as with the hand. When the two gunfighters face off in the street, they often spend moments sizing each other up or trading hard words before blood is shed. Each gunfighter makes a Saving Throw, adding his Experience Level as a bonus to the roll. Cutting insults, threats to loved ones, or damaging revelations can also add modifiers of -2 to +2, at the Referee's discretion. If the Saving Throw is successful, the gunfighter adds +2d6 to his Quick Draw Initiative.

Step Four: Draw!

Finally, the moment of truth has come and it's time for polymerized steel to break syntheleather. Each gunfighter rolls their Initiative, applying both their Dexterity bonus and any Quick Draw Initiative dice they have earned. So, a gunfighter who succeeded in the Saving Throws for all three (3) steps would roll 5d6 (1d6 for base Initiative + 1d6 for The Call Out + 1d6 for The Crowd + 2d6 for The Staredown), plus their Dexterity modifier.

The winner has drawn and fired first. He then makes an Attack Roll against an AC of 9 [10]. His target is, after all standing still and unprotected. If the attack is successful, the winning gunfighter rolls his weapon damage PLUS the total of the Initiative roll, inflicting that much damage on his opponent (likely killing him).

If the loser survives, he can return fire but receives no bonus from his Initiative roll. Combat proceeds normally from this point on, with one exception—if both gunfighters rolled the exact same number on their Initiative, then both draw and fire at the exact same moment and both add their Initiative total to the damage. In all likelihood, this results in the death of BOTH gunfighters, leaving the residents of Tathkee Station with a fantastic story to tell!

HOUSE RULE:

QUICK OR DEAD

If the Referee wants to reinforce the climactic tension and deadly nature of the Quick Draw Duel, he can forgo the attack roll made during Step Four: Draw! and assume that the winner of Initiative automatically hits with their attack.

HOUSE RULE:

HOT LEAD, BURNING LASER

If the winner of the Quick Draw Duel rolls a natural "20" on their Attack Roll, all damage for both the weapon and the added damage dice from Initiative are doubled, almost guaranteeing a lethal attack. This House Rule cannot be combined with House Rule: Quick or Dead.

injuries or even death. Street Justice occurs in the public eye, not in some back alley or ventilation shaft. Station Security conducts investigations, but rarely sides with the criminals. The alleged criminals may even be detained in a Security holding cell to await further trial and punishment.

DUELS

Duels are public spectacles that are agreed upon by both parties. Duels are a holdover from the aristocratic families of Planet Prime and are still celebrated on the Consortium homeworld of Omega Consor. They are usually conducted in a public forum to avoid any claims of impropriety, with rules agreed upon by both parties. Laser pistols (particularly antiquated laser pistols that resemble ancient firearms) and swords are the most common weapons of choice.

Duels between important parties may become a spectator event where food vendors, starlots (space harlots), and pickpockets ply their trades. Duels may also occur in the street, at a moment's notice, although combatants may be responsible for incidental injuries and damages that occur. Famous duelists have even become celebrities that are invited to eat for free and gamble "on the house" at certain cantinas to attract customers.

BACKROOM DEAL

Backroom Deals consist of deals between the offender and the victim (or a third party), wherein fines and restitution are waived in exchange for goods or services. Backroom Deals are commonly conducted if the offender has skills to offer (piloting, mining, combat, etc.).

If the terms of the Backroom Deal are recorded and logged, Tathkee Station Security does their best to ensure that both parties uphold their end of the bargain. If the terms are agreed upon privately, the parties must settle their own accounts if one party or the other defaults.

FORCED LABOR

Forced Labor is a form of indentured servitude where the offender's fines are settled by Ingan Tathkee (through a proxy) in exchange for laboring at Tathkee Station. The offender is fitted with a Pop Collar (see NEW EQUIPMENT) and is put to work doing menial tasks such as cleaning the station, preparing food, sifting through station recycling, or harvesting Uzaki vines.

Offenders who possess a particular skill (such as Technology) may be given other assignments. During the sentence, the offender is housed in the Forced Laborer's Quarters in the Industrial Module and kept under a strict schedule. Unsatisfactory performance leads to extended sentences.

EXECUTION

Execution is reserved for the worst armed robbers, murderers, and pirates. It consists of execution by firing squad. The offender's body is usually consigned to Station Recycling, however, friends and family members may pay for its release.

PUBLIC EXECUTION

Public Execution is the most severe sentence that can be handed down at the station. The guilty party is given a last meal and allowed to speak his final words before being forced to step off a retractable platform in Tathkee Arena known as The Long Walk (see ROOF LEVEL).

If the offender is capable of flight, this ability is taken from him (pinning of wings, disabling a rocket modification, etc.). Death comes from the poison gases of Varrul and/or the fall to the planet's Core.

Public Executions draw crowds of onlookers, most of whom are happy to see justice done. Fireworks often accompany the jump, providing an extra flair for the dramatic.

COMMERCE

Tathkee Station is a bustling spaceport that entertains visitors from all over the known galaxy. It is said that anything can be had here for a price. All forms of standard equipment and weapons may be purchased at up to three times

(x3) the normal rates because of the unreliability of shipments.

The Intergalactic Credit (ic) is the standard form of currency aboard the station. It is backed by the largest banks in the Galactic Consortium and can be redeemed almost anywhere. Intergalactic Credits may be exchanged digitally (using minicomputers) or withdrawn in chip form at any bank.

Barter is another common method of doing business aboard Tathkee Station where resources are sometimes limited, and shipments of supplies are irregular. Barter relies largely on supply and demand. The Referee can roll 1d6 to determine the value of a given item for the current week. 1 = no or minimal value; 2-4 = half value; 5 = normal value; 6 = twice value. Values are equal to those listed in **CHAPTER THREE: EQUIPMENT** of *White Star: Galaxy Edition*™.

Station Credit (sc) is another form of currency that is issued on Tathkee Station. Station Credit is backed by Ingan Tathkee. It is extended at a rate of one (1) sc per five (5) ic. Anyone who owes more than 1,000 sc to Ingan Tathkee is not allowed to leave the station without his authorization.

TIME

The residents of Tathkee Station make use of the standard Unified Systems Calendar (USC) that was in place long before the Galactic Consortium came to power. This calendar is based upon the revolution of Planet Prime as it orbits the Sterling Sun and consists of roughly 5 days per week, 5 weeks per month, and 15 months per year (375 days per year).



Tathkee Station remains in geosynchronous orbit around the gas giant Varrul. A single revolution around Varrul consists of 25 standard hours. The station maintains a regular cycle of 15 hour “days” and 10 hour “nights”, dimming and brightening its interior lights as needed.

RESIDENTS OF TATHKEE STATION

Tathkee Station boasts a population of approximately seven (7) to ten (10) thousand, with up to three (3) times as many visitors being present on any given day, all crammed together inside the confines of the aging station.

The station’s residents are a mixed lot of aliens from all over the known galaxy. Some are permanent residents (mostly tradesmen and business owners) while others are just passing through.

Most visitors are miners, skyranch hands, mechanics, pilots, mercenaries, and entrepreneurs involved in the mining industry. A few have come seeking other forms of profit, such as bounty hunting or independent shipping (smuggling). Others have come here to outrun their past (and/or the authorities).

The majority of the station’s inhabitants have lived along the Galactic Expanse or the Galactic Edge most of their lives. They tend to be a bit insular and “rough around the edges”. The few aristocrats and wealthy investors from the Galactic Holdings and the Galactic Center rarely mingle with the lower classes.

The members of various factions (mining companies, mercenary bands, street gangers, etc.) often take an “us against them” attitude, which frequently leads to disagreements and fights.

DAILY LIFE

Daily life aboard Tathkee Station depends heavily upon one’s wealth and status. Most residents and visitors eke out a living by working during the day and enjoying the station’s cantinas and pleasure houses at night. The poorer residents live in maintenance shafts or cargo containers and must scrounge for food and necessities. The wealthier residents dwell in luxurious flats that provide all the comforts of the Sterling Sector.

The station never closes, although most retail shops operate only during normal businesses hours. The station is dimly lit, with natural reddish light from Varrul’s skies filtering in through fabriglass domes and portals in the hull. The modules and hallways are crowded by day, with a large number of lifeforms hurrying about their business.

The station is quieter at night, with only cantinas, casinos, pleasure houses, and some exotic goods dealers open to accommodate customers. In the darker reaches, neon signs flicker, shopkeepers haggle their wares, and Uttins and Yabnabs scurry through the tangled mass of Uzaki vines that cover the walls and floors.

STYLES OF DRESS

The residents of Tathkee Station hail from all over the galaxy, but most came from the rural reaches of the Galactic Expanse or the frontier systems of the Galactic Edge. Typical clothing for men consists of a jacket, loose shirt, and pants made of durable fabriwool. Suspenders are preferred over belts; boots are preferred over shoes.

Women wear long dresses or blouses, vests, and skirts. Bonnets or scarves are used to keep hair out of the eyes. More formal wear for men consists of tidy suits, double-breasted vests, and puff ties or cravats, with corsets, long gloves, and bustles for women.

Miners at work wear durable coveralls. Mercenaries prefer combat fatigues, suspenders, and thick jackets over sleeveless shirts. Breathing masks and environmental suits are a must-have for anyone who leaves Tathkee Station. Broad-brimmed Outrider hats and dusters are worn by many workers (especially skyranch hands) to combat Varrul's frequent rains.

Wealthier residents and visitors from the more prosperous systems of the Galactic Holdings and the Galactic Center often wear expensive modern clothing made of real *Shishi* silk and other natural fabric blends. Women prefer long dresses while men wear bob hats, capes or form-fitting jackets, vests, shirts, and pants. These clothes are usually decorated with eye-catching trim such as thin neon tubes, precious stones, or scintillating threads that makes them impractical for use in Varrul's harsh atmosphere.



LEISURE ACTIVITIES

In their free time, residents of Tathkee Station engage in common leisure activities found across the galaxy.

The station is completely isolated from the outside world, so gossip, news reports, and recordings of popular shows or sporting events from the Sterling Sector are always welcome diversions.

Station residents enjoy a blend of music, from the flashing neon lights and synthetic rhythms of Technovibe, to the monster jams of the edgiest Star Rockers, to the folksy ballads of Red Rya cazhines (harmonicas) and *wailstrings* (fiddles) that is popular along the Galactic Edge. For some, music is the only escape from their dreary existence.

Technosense Theaters (see TATHKEE STATION SHOPS AND BUSINESSES) provide another quick and relatively inexpensive escape for most. Those with a few extra credits in their accounts prefer the fermented likwids, mind-altering drugs, and other earthly pleasures found in the station's cantinas, casinos, and brothels.

Gambling is another popular pastime. Credits are wagered on everything from foot races to wrestling matches to tense hands of Knight's Gambit (played in endless variants). Bookies and loan sharks are always on hand to manage large bets. Debt is a problem that has forced many independent miners to seek low-paying work for large mining companies in order to avoid a sentence of Forced Labor (or worse).

Violent sporting events such as Crushball, Sklarbrawling, and Energas Racing are extremely popular. Arranged combat between robots and living creatures is another common source of entertainment. The DeathDrop is an exciting competition where skydivers jump from a Tathkee Station landing platform and try to paraglide onto a floating skydock far below. A Starball tournament is a huge draw, especially if the host can bring in a few professional Starball players with paid endorsements from Varrul's wealthier mining corporations.

NECESSITIES

Tathkee Station offers bare necessities to even the poorest station residents. The Uzaki vines creeping throughout the station ensure that no one goes hungry—the vines can be ground into a gritty paste that provides plenty of nutrients. Vermin such as gatta rats and *mipolo* frogs living in the vines are also hunted and eaten raw by the poor, or fried and spiced to be sold on sticks or mixed in a stew by street vendors.

Water is available from pushlever fountains found throughout the station. This water is a combination of fresh water drawn from Varrul's atmosphere mixed with filtered urine and other bodily excretions processed in the Station Recycling Center. Better food and drink is available from various shops and businesses at a price.

WEAPONS AND ARMOR

Tathkee Station is home to a number of mercenaries, bounty hunters, outlaws, and rogue agents. Ingan Tathkee knows better than to try to disarm the populace, so weapons and armor are openly worn, with a few restrictions.

Laser pistols and laser rifles are common aboard the station, but have fallen out of favor after proving unreliable in Varrul's ionically charged atmosphere.

Firearms have seen a resurgence, but have also proven dangerous after exposure to some of Varrul's flammable gases. The use of firearms, fragmentation grenades, and similar projectile weapons aboard the station is forbidden as ricochets and punctures can expose the station to the planet's toxic atmosphere.

Melee weapons and archaic ranged weapons (such as crossbows) have become much more common because they do not rely on power cells. Nearly every resident carries some type of dagger or knife.

RUMORS AND GOSSIP

The following rumors and gossip can be overheard aboard Tathkee Station. It is up to the Referee to decide whether or not these rumors are true. They may even lead to full-fledged adventures, at the Referee's discretion.

1. "I just found my friend Lorter Styne's skycruiser wrecked out on a floating island. The things those vllarking Bugs did to his family. . . It's gonna give me nightmares for months. How many more innocent lives have to be lost? It's time to start killing every living thing on this planet. Only then can we have some peace."

2. "Have you noticed anything strange about the Uttins and Yabnabs living on this station? They don't seem to like each other much."

3. "Morko-Kill Productions is offering good credits for capturing violent native beasts. I think they're planning a fight night. I hope they throw in some botfighting as well. My money's on Warbot D if he enters. He's undefeated so far."

4. "I'm not ashamed to say I fell in love with a starlot. Lam Cheng Yuet Ngor. You might have seen her around. Beautiful as a Varrulian dawn, but colder than the Void. I gave her everything—all the Varrulium I had mined. Now I barely have enough for a watered down brew."

5. "Those Borbrisian delinquents were throwing skins full of urine on Tathkee Plaza yesterday. The SSRs aren't built to chase them through the vines."

6. "The Bugs are hive creatures. If you kill the Queen, the rest will die."

7. "That chilco I got from Phazer's Eats yesterday was the best I've ever had."

8. "I was on the docking platforms last night when Screaming Mi-Mis mercenaries trashed an Ultiina Mining scout ship. Something about a late

payment. The commanding officer was a pretty thing in power armor, name of Lieutenant Gale Trevyllon. She demanded to speak with Security Chief Olthan and they worked it out."

9. "That Sinthlife Industries pilot was killed during a 5DT Technosense war flick. A guy dressed as a Qinlon just walked up and slit his throat and everyone thought it was part of the show. They still haven't found the one who did it yet, but they found his Qinlon mask in the Access Halls behind the theater."

10. "They say Old Man Tathkee's got some kind of weird robot fetish. Some think he just hates people. Either way, you better not mistreat a robot in front of him."

11. "Impoll Planetary Research launched an expedition to the Core a few weeks ago. If they find it, I'll be the first one to sign up. All that Varrulium. . . Can you imagine the credits to be made?"

12. "Have you seen Bjorn Svaldson? Big merc, red beard? He shot up my boss's cantina the other night with those two assault rifles of his. You see him, you let him know we're looking."

13. "Shocktroopers just snatched a skyranch hand named Kaliwes Tun off the street in the Club Mod and took him to that Consortium agent Atalu Na'veen. It's probably got something to do with the range war that's brewing between the Triple-Eye and the 1-Tree-Bolt skyranches. I hear the Triple-Eye has been siphoning off 1-Tree-Bolt fields, and both sides are now hiring gun hands to protect their skyranges. Either way, I doubt we'll be seeing poor Kaliwes again. . ."

14. "Did you ask Miss Alana? Yes, that cute, harmless little Brimling with the bumble dog. That lady knows everything."

15. "Campesii Productions is trying to organize a skybooster race. Word is they're trying to rent Qoscal Track, but most of us want to see them race in the open skies of Varrul. That would be a sight!"

16. "I hacked into the station's security network and downloaded this passcode. I'm not sure what it means, but I bet it's worth some credits. Take a look: <01001010 01100101 01101110 00100000 01110011 01100001 01111001 01110011 00100000 01100100 01110010 01101001 01101110 01101011 00100000 01111001 01101111 01110101 01110010 00100000 01101111 01110110 01100001 01101100 01110100 01101001 01101110 01100101>"

17. "These gangs are getting out of hand. Did you see that fight between the Shade Riders and the Grollskull skybikers on the landing platform? Security better do something about them or it's only going to get worse."

18. "Those Brimlings that just arrived are a pair of strange ones. Madon and Arden's their names, I think. They were asking who scared poor old Trarruson so bad that he was raving like a madman before he died. Some kind of poison I hear. I'm sure it was that Kaltoin's crew, so those two better be careful asking so many questions."

19. "If you can fight, you can make some credits Skarbrawling at Afeeni's

Theater. There are also a few underground clubs looking for brawlers, but they don't take care of their fighters as well."

19. "The crazies are out. I just heard one of those Alien Aware shultheads saying the Bugs are just like you and me. If it was up to them, there would be no mining and we'd all starve."

COMMON PHRASES

The following phrases and gestures are common among the residents of Tathkee Station.

- **Prize:** A slang term for something desirable, as in: "That was a prize starship, for sure."
- **Star:** A common term for kindness or wholesomeness, as in: "That was mighty Star of her to help you like that" or "That new landlord is Star, through and through. He's letting that widow and her children live there for free while she gets back on her feet."
- **Aize:** A slang term for a lifeform's hindquarters. Also used as a curse word, as in: "I'm gonna kick your aize, you stupid Brimling."
- **Shult:** A slang term for excrement. Also used as a curse word, as in: "I can't believe this shult" or "This shult is getting crazy in here."
- **Tamun:** A curse word often used for emphasis, as in: "Get out of my tamun way!"
- **Vlark:** A slang term for intercourse. Also used as a curse word, as in: "Go vlark yourself" or "I'm not telling you a vlarking thing!"
- **Go Open an Airlock:** A less vulgar way of saying "Go vlark yourself."
- **V-Fever:** Refers to the contagious excitement of the Varrulium Rush. Usually refers to those who have sold their belongings and/or sacrificed their livelihoods in the hopes of striking it rich on Planet Varrul.
- **Purple Ride:** A slang term for leaving the station to explore Varrul's skies, as in: "He's going to take the purple ride on his skybike."
- **Yellow Droge or Yellow:** A slang term for someone who is a coward. Refers to the yellow-furred Droge dogs who scavenge through the junkyards of Planet Ramertha in the Rame System of the Galactic Edge.
- **Run like a Broost:** Another slang term for someone who is a coward. Refers to the instinctive reaction of native Varrulian Broosts to run from a fight.
- **Going Uttin or Gone Uttin:** A slang term for someone who is hiding from the authorities. Refers to the Uttin clan that lives in the bowels of Tathkee Station, as in: "Jaxson's gone Uttin since that bungled robbery on the Main Deck. No one's seen him in weeks."
- **Doing the Robo Boogie:** A slang term for a robot that talks back or acts "uppity", as in: "I told that waiterbot to hurry up with my drinks and he started doing the Robo Boogie on me."

- **Long Walk:** A reference to plummeting to one's doom on Planet Varrul. Also the name of formal Public Execution.
- **The Germ:** A slang term for V-poisoning, as in: "The Kintok mercenaries just landed on Platform 3. Looks like most of 'em got the Germ."
- **Leaf Eater:** A derogatory term for someone so poor they are forced to eat Uzaki vines.
- **Bugs:** A derogatory term for the Tikatikatik aliens.
- **Scuttlejumped:** Used. Worn Out. Refers to starship that is on its last legs and about to be scuttled. Also refers to aging starlots. Often used as an insult.
- **Riding for the Brand:** Loyalty to a particular skyranch. May also be used to refer to loyalty to a company, faction, or gang.
- **Lordo:** A derogatory term for someone born in the Galactic Center. Refers to their tendency to look down on the rest of the galaxy as uneducated and unenlightened.
- **Nibbler:** A derogatory term for someone born in the prosperous systems of the Galactic Holdings. Refers to their tendency to dabble in intergalactic politics and commerce.
- **Bunion:** A derogatory term for someone born in the rural, hardworking reaches of the Galactic Expanse. Usually used by residents of the Galactic Center or Galactic Holdings.



- **Edgy or Edger:** A term used to describe someone born along the frontier of the Galactic Edge.
- **Wilder or Wildling:** A term used to describe someone born in the uncharted reaches of the Galactic Beyond.
- **The Old Man:** Commonly used to refer to the station's Chief Administrator Ingan Tathkee.
- **Cold Metal:** Commonly used to refer to Security Chief Max Olthan.
- **Clankers:** Commonly used to refer to Station Security Robots, as in: "You better get gone. The clankers'll be here any minute."
- **Resto (pl. Restos):** Abbreviated term used for members of the Restoration.
- **Geek (pl. Geeks):** Derogatory term for agents of the Galactic Consortium. Comes from sounding the letters G and C together, as in: "That Geek agent was nosing around here yesterday looking for two robots."
- **Geek Suit or Geek Trooper:** Derogatory term used to refer to Consortium shocktroopers. Refers to their distinctive shocktrooper battle armor. "Those Geek Suits can't shoot for shult. Everyone knows that."
- **Restoration Slime:** Insult used to refer to members of the Restoration (usually made by an agent of the Galactic Consortium).
- **Organics:** Slang term used mainly by robots to refer to living beings.
- **Skin Sack or Hydro:** A derogatory terms used by robots to refer to living beings, particularly humans.
- **Club Mod:** A slang term for the Entertainment Module.
- **Digger's Mod:** A slang term for the Industrial Module.
- **Scrapper Mod:** A slang term for the Repair Module.
- **Food Mod:** A slang term for the Culinary Module.
- **Street:** Common term for thoroughfares in the modules and halls of Tathkee Station.

TATHKEE STATION LAYOUT

Tathkee Station is an enormous structure made of various synthetic materials including fabristeel, fabriglass, fabricrete, and molded fabriplast. The station layout consists of a domed Central Module and four Outer Modules connected by a Habitat Ring and open Halls. Docking Platforms are located beneath the station and along the Outer Modules.

Uzaki creeper vines cover much of the station's interior walls and floors. Although unsightly, the vines serve as natural air scrubbers and a reliable source of food. The vines also act as Energy Dampers (see CHAPTER 0009: NEW STARSHIPS AND VEHICLES) that have thus far protected the station from plasma storms like the ones that downed the unfortunate Tel-Gavari and Hamplo stations. Although JEN suspects this might be the case, Ingan Tathkee

has instructed her to keep the knowledge secret to avoid future competition.

GETTING AROUND

The residents of Tathkee Station rely mainly on foot travel to get around. Travel by skyboards, rickshaws, and skycarts is allowed at reasonable speeds. Flight involving wings or jetpacks is also permitted in open areas.

A public Lift system provides access throughout the station. These Lifts travel up, down, and sideways, taking passengers to and from their desired destination. Private Lifts that are “off limits” to the public provide the same type of access to station personnel, security, and in some cases, wealthy private interests. Public staircases and escalator stations also connect some floors.

The Lifts and escalators can be unreliable, sometimes getting stuck for hours until Uttin work crews can make repairs. That’s why most residents prefer to walk to their destinations.

STATION DEFENSES

Tathkee Station has been operating in conflict zones on the edge of known space for years. The station employs a number of legal and illegal defensive systems including Laser Cannons, Heavy Lasers, and even Proton Missile Tubes hidden in concealed turrets, with shield generators linked to its reactors. This is more than enough firepower to ward off pirates and raiders, but Ingan Tathkee prefers to pay local officials and security forces for protection whenever possible.

MAIN DOCKING PLATFORM

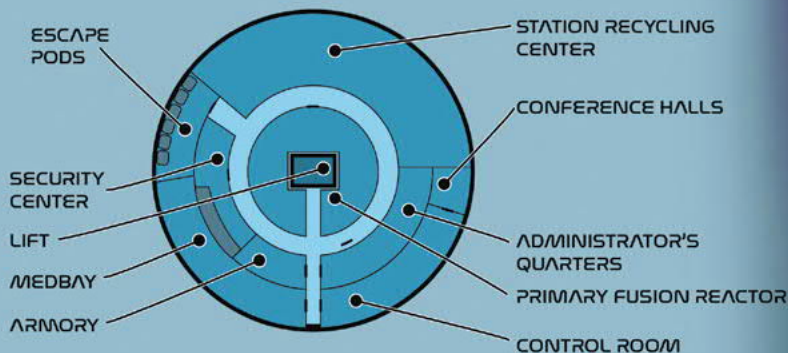
The Main Docking Platform is located beneath the station. It was originally designed for skycraft, but has been modified to accommodate small starships such as stunt fighters, transport shuttles, and light freighters. The platform configuration changes with the needs of the station, with new platforms being added beside or beneath existing ones. Larger vessels are allowed to hover nearby, connecting to the platforms via a network of catwalks, umbilical ducts, and retractable boarding ramps.

The platforms tend to be chaotic, with cluttered landing pads, discarded wires, stripped machinery, and pilots and repair crews going about their business. Cantinas located along the platforms provide a quick dose of rest and relaxation. A polarized forcefield expels Varrul’s toxic gases from the open platforms, but most visitors keep a breathing mask or exposure suit handy just in case the system fails.

Visiting starships and vehicles must obtain clearance to connect to, land on, or take off from any Tathkee docking platform. A standard docking fee of 10 ic (5 ic for vehicles), with an additional 5 ic per day (1 ic per day for

WELCOME TO Tathkee Station

COMMAND CENTER AND UTILITIES
Restricted access



MAIN DOCKING PLATFORM

AIRLOCK

LIFT

AIRLOCK

DESTINATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
0		

vehicles) after the first is assessed. The fee includes full refueling for all vessels. Combination docking, food, and lodging package deals are sometimes available in conjunction with various nilhomes (see TATHKEE STATION SHOPS AND BUSINESSES).

COMMAND CENTER AND UTILITIES

The Command Center is the heart of Tathkee Station. It can be accessed only with proper authorization. Station Security Robots patrol the Command Center halls and JEN monitors this area day and night.

CONTROL ROOM

The Control Room is a large room filled with high-tech viewscreens and holoprojectors. JEN's primary interface is located here. She is able to monitor station activity and report any issues to Ingan Tathkee.

MEDBAY

The MedBay contains state of the art medical equipment. A docbot named AD-2b is on hand to provide medical care. A high-end cloiba juice tank present here can heal even the most grievous wounds. The MedBay is reserved for Ingan Tathkee's use. Other station residents must pay for care from folk healers, traveling medics, or at the various DocShops located throughout the station.

ARMORY

The Armory is one of the most fortified locations on Tathkee Station. Its doors and walls are made of reinforced borganium, which is almost indestructible. Outer defenses consist of remote laser batteries, flamethrowers, halon gas, and acid spray nozzles.

The Armory contains a variety of modern and archaic weaponry, as well as any exotic alien technology of the Referee's choosing. Access to an Escape Pod is also located here, allowing the station's command staff to make a last stand and a quick retreat if needed.

SECURITY CENTER

The Security Center contains holding cells designed to accommodate a variety of lifeforms. 1d6 alien prisoners may be found here at any given time, awaiting trial and judgement. The cells utilize forcefields, reinforced doors, and good old-fashioned bars to prevent escape. The Security Center is typically manned by SSRs, but is closely monitored by JEN.

ESCAPE PODS

The upper decks of Tathkee Station once contained an extensive escape pod network designed to save thousands. However, most of these pods have been

stripped away to provide housing and extra floor space. The station's last remaining Escape Pods are located in the Command Center. There are a total of four (4) pods here, with each pod able to accommodate six (6) standard lifeforms.

PRIMARY FUSION REACTOR

The Primary Fusion Reactor is located between the Command Center and the Main Deck, above. It provides more than enough energy to power the station's systems, including its shields, weapons, life support, and the antigravitic stabilizers that hold it in orbit.

CONFERENCE HALLS

These simply decorated boardrooms are intended for business meetings. However, Tathkee prefers to conduct business at his club, Machinas, which lies atop the Entertainment Module.

ADMINISTRATOR'S QUARTERS

These quarters belong to Ingan Tathkee. They are filled with exotic items of advanced technology and alien relics from across the galaxy. Tathkee entertains guests in a comfortable sitting room where some of these objects are on display. His quarters also include an elaborate workshop where he likes to tinker with alien machinery in his spare time. A secure private Lift provides quick access to anywhere in the station. A private Escape Pod is hidden behind a false wall.

STATION RECYCLING CENTER

This large, humid chamber is where the majority of the station's air, water, and waste are recycled. It is tended by robots, Forced Laborers, and alien species that thrive in this kind of organic environment. The smell is overwhelming and tends to stick to the skin and clothes.

CENTRAL MODULE

The Central Module is dominated by a large, open plaza lined with shops and businesses. An ornate fountain/lift occupies the center of the module, with narrow canals of running water winding along the floor. The Central Module is better lighted and kept than much of the surrounding station, even with the jumble of floating kiosks cluttering up the overhead view.

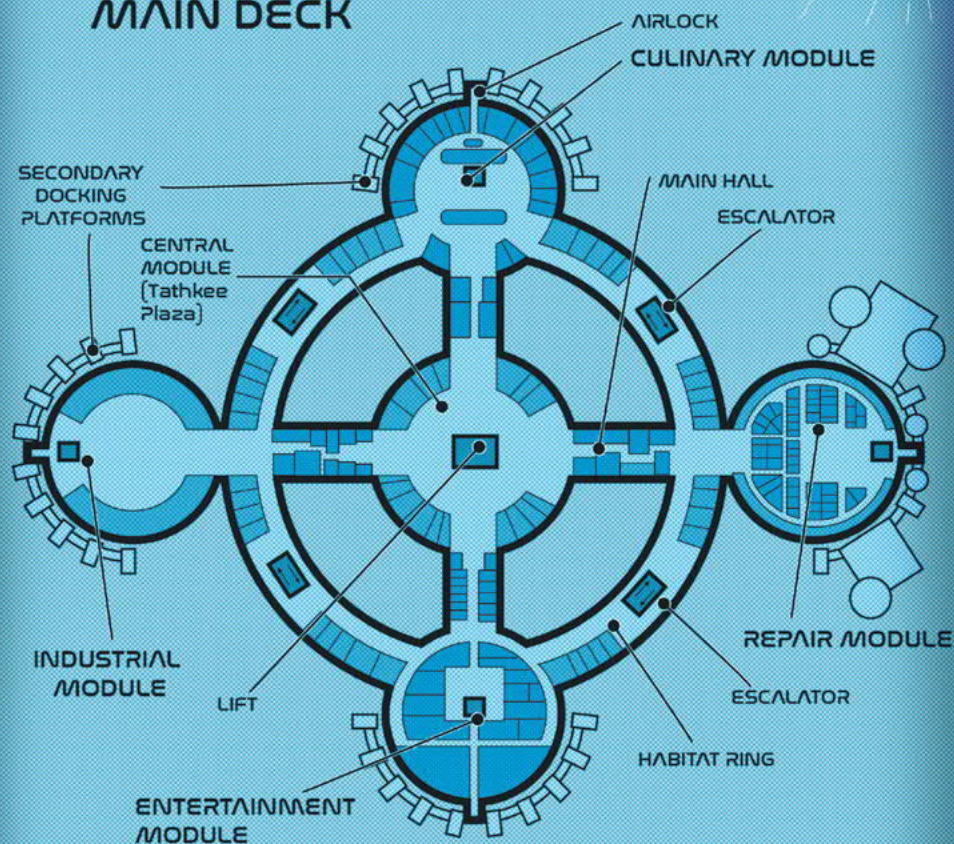
Listed below are just a few places of note located in the Central Module.

TATHKEE PLAZA

Tathkee Plaza is the hub of activity in Tathkee Station. It is a large, circular chamber with overlooking balconies, floating kiosks, and a fabriglass dome

WELCOME TO Tathkee Station

MAIN DECK

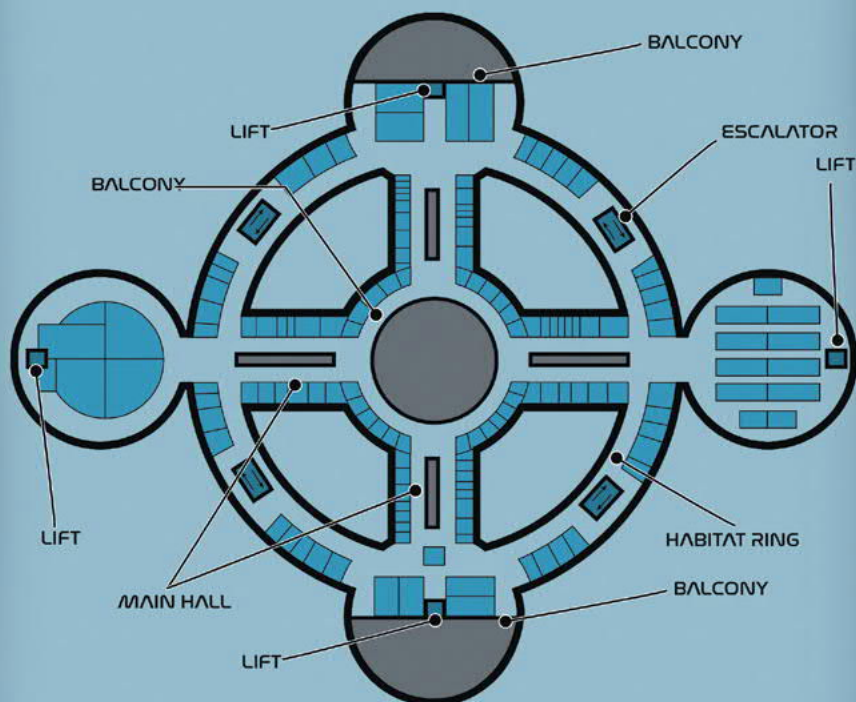


DESTINATION

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WELCOME TO Tathkee Station

Upper Deck



DESTINATION



SKLARBRAWLING*

Sklarbrawls involve combat between two (2) fighters wielding giant axes with magnetic blades and weighted shafts known as Sklars. No armor is allowed during a Sklarbrawl. Each fighter wears contractible metal bands on his body, three per limb, attached at the joints of the wrist, elbow, shoulder, ankle, knee, and upper thigh.

The bands are split down the middle with a magnetic attractor that draws the Sklar blades to it. A missed attack causes 1 damage, as the blade pings off the metal. A successful strike causes 1 damage and has a 3 in 6 chance of cutting off part of the body.

Side of Body

1-3 (Left)

4-6 (Right)

Limb

1-3 (Arm)

4-6 (Leg)

Joint

1-2 (Wrist/Ankle)

3-4 (Elbow/Knee)

5-6 (Shoulder/Upper Thigh)

The contractible bands act as tourniquets and painkillers, so the fighter does not bleed to death and can continue fighting. The fighter suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to his Attack Roll for every joint lost. For example, a fighter whose limb is cut off at the shoulder or upper thigh suffers a -3 penalty to his Attack Roll. When all limbs are severed, the opposing fighter must use the weighted end of the Sklar for attacks.

Victory is determined by knockout (being reduced to 0 hp), loss of a predetermined number of limbs, or in rare cases, death. A fighter who loses both arms can still attack with kicks and headbutts (or even bites), hoping to score a knockout or kill.

Sklarbrawlers normally sign contracts with Morko-Kill Productions that pay for full reassembly and healing in a *cloiba* juice tank. Less reputable entertainment companies and establishments are not so kind, with some employing docbots or disgraced surgeons to surgically reattach lost limbs—if they offer any kind of medical services at all. Some even add an additional band around the neck to make the fight more interesting, although this is illegal in most systems.

high above. During the day, the soft purples, reds, and blues of Varrul's skies are visible outside. The dome is darkened at "night" and filled with stars and constellations visible from Omega Consor in the Sterling Sector.

Tathkee Plaza is considered a prime location for shops and businesses. This is the first stop for most visitors to Tathkee Station and the eateries, retail stores, and cantinas here are top notch. Station Security Robots (SSRs) are a constant presence among the crowds in Tathkee Plaza.

CHILD OF ARTELLIS LIFT FOUNTAIN

A decorative Lift occupies the center of the plaza. Recycled water flows from a fountain above the Lift down into channels cut in the floor. Uzaki vines overhang the Lift and creep among the tables and chairs occupying the plaza. The vines sometimes foul the Lift and must be cleared by Yabnab gardeners on staff. JEN officially named the fountain to honor Ingan Tathkee and his homeworld of Artellis, but only a handful know this private information.

BANTENE'S CORNER

Bantene's Corner is a convenience store that offers perishable goods, cheap brews, tart likwids, and gambling randomizers at marked up prices. It is best known for its iced *hakanti* tea, fried *mipolo* frog legs, and spiced, spit-roasted gatta rat sticks. Bantene's Corner is owned and operated by the crotchety old Benn Bantene, who refuses to sell out to the owners of the OneStop chain, despite repeated threats and intimidation.

GILMONT'S THIS AND THAT

Gilmont's This and That is a curio shop that specializes in alien jewelry, furniture, artwork, and decorations from all over the galaxy. It is owned and operated by a Fritch (humanoid, perpetual smile with oversized teeth) named Gilmont who also fences high-end stolen goods on the side. Items of advanced technology or spiritual significance may sometimes be found at Gilmont's, but showing too much interest is sure to increase the asking price.

STERLING COURT

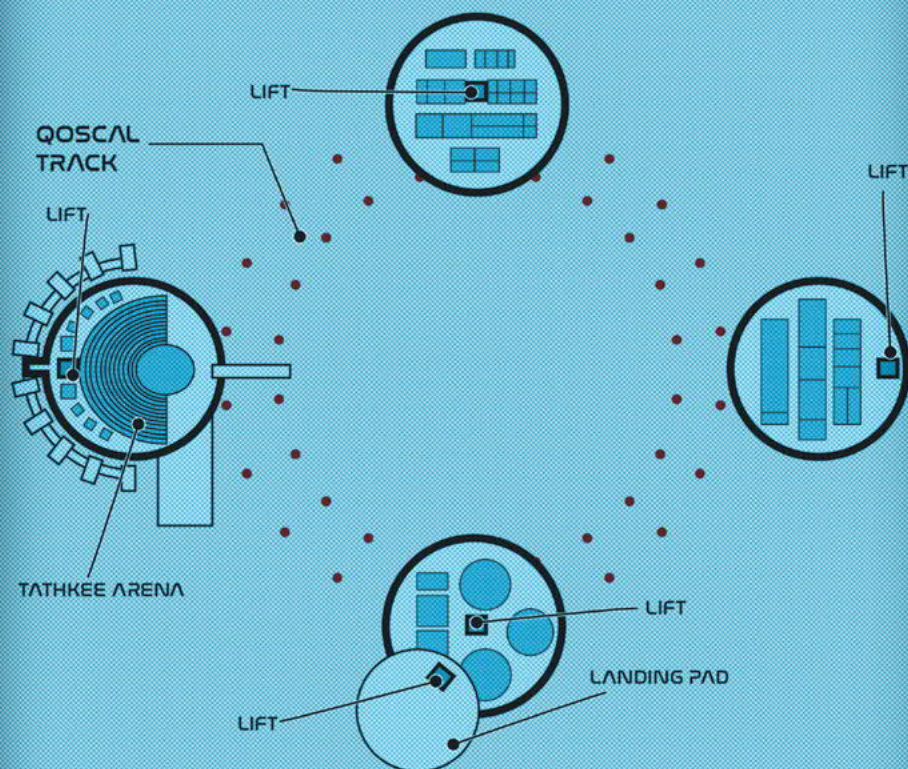
The Sterling Court is a large hall where most trials on Tathkee Station occur. Court typically convenes twice per month and is often a public entertainment spectacle.

TASTE OF THE SEA

Taste of the Sea is a modest eatery that specializes in seafood from a variety of different worlds. The dining area contains aquariums filled with colorful fish, crustaceans, shellfish, and other marine flora and fauna. The mood here is serene, making it an excellent place to take that special someone. The native Kendree Krabs are an especially tasty (and expensive) delicacy served here.

WELCOME TO Tathkee Station

Roof level



DESTINATION

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
0		

MAIN HALLS

The Main Halls extend from Tathkee Plaza to the Outer Modules at the end of each hall. The halls consist of two floors—the Upper Halls and the Lower Halls.

The Lower Halls are lined with shops, with the center being commonly referred to as “the street”. The Upper Hall (sometimes known as Vendor’s Row) is lined with kiosks and street vendors, with balconies overlooking the Lower Halls. Street performers, orators, protesters, and other speakers congregate in both the Upper and Lower Halls. A curved fabriglass ceiling extends over the Halls and is outfitted with the same timed holoprojectors as the dome over Tathkee Plaza.

ACCESS HALLS (NOT SHOWN)

The Access Halls run behind the Main Halls. They were designed to provide entrance to employees and commercial cargo for the various shops and businesses along the Main Halls. They are now cluttered with junk, overgrown with Uzaki vines, and home only to the poor and destitute. The airlocks along the Access Halls have been permanently sealed, however, they may be hacked by a skilled cypher to allow undocumented access or exit (Referee’s discretion).

MAINTENANCE SHAFTS (NOT SHOWN)

Tathkee Station is riddled with maintenance shafts that are not indicated on any public map. The shafts extend horizontally and vertically, creating a labyrinthine network that runs parallel to the station’s common areas. Uzaki vines choke off many of these shafts and must be routinely cleared away to keep them from fouling normal systems.

The layout of the original shafts is accessible through the station computer grid. However, over the decades, these shafts have been blocked, extended, and modified to accommodate the station’s needs, and not all of these changes were recorded.

The eccentric Uttin clans and Yabnab tribes who live aboard the station claim that the Maintenance Shafts are home to a variety of predatory lifeforms, but few believe this to be true.

OUTER MODULES

The Outer Modules are multilevel structures that once housed various retail giants such as Zhaponneys, Drelka’s, and Macines. They are now designated by function. The Outer Modules tend to be cramped and crowded day and night.

INDUSTRIAL MODULE (A.K.A. DIGGER'S MOD)

The Industrial Module contains businesses that cater to mercenaries, miners, and the mining industry. A few seedy eateries, brothels, and nilhomes are located here. Their food tends to be bland, the starlots are *scuttlejumped*, and some of the nilhomes maximize profits by offering "rooms" that are little more than human-sized holes cut into bulkheads. The Industrial Module is one of the bleakest public areas on Tathkee Station.

Listed below are just a few places of note located in the Industrial Module. Unless otherwise noted, the Referee may drop these places anywhere in the Industrial Module.

AFEENI'S THEATER

Afeeni's Theater is a cantina built around several large fighting pits. Afeeni's Theater is owned by an entertainment company named Morko-Kill Productions. Wagers are taken on pit fights between robots, aliens, and beasts, with amateur Sklarbrawls being the most popular sporting event.

Comfort Homes

This modest nilhome offers decent lodging at acceptable rates. Comfort Homes is frequented mainly by investors and officials of private mining companies. It is owned and operated by a family of ex-skyranchers named the Wiloksens.

FORCED LABORER'S QUARTERS

This station-run facility houses workers sentenced to Forced Labor. It consists of a mess hall which serves only Uzaki paste and a common sleeping area that contains row upon row of fabristeel cots. Mind-numbing music is played to pacify the laborers and the food is laced with mild depressants. The facility is run by administrative staffbots who manage labor assignments all over the station.

LEPP'S CHILCO STAND

Lepp's Chilco Stand is a floating kiosk that serves chilco wraps to hungry miners. Chilco is a common food mixture that consists of spiced "mystery meat" and Uzaki paste bundled inside a syntheflour wrap. The chilco wraps are filling, but their nutritional value is poor. Two (2) wraps, a can of Roke (or some other hydrosugar drink), and a tube of recycled synthecheese typically costs 1 ic and provides enough energy (and heartburn) for an entire day. The stand is owned and operated by a dirty human male named Lepp Osotran. The skycart stays parked on the street and doubles as Lepp's home.

MADGE'S WASH

Madge's Wash is a combination brothel and laundromat owned and operated by a no-nonsense female Stilok (turkey-necked humanoid alien with a monocle) named Madge Mudgins. It is frequented mainly by miners or skyranch hands who pay for a hot bath and a quick romp while their clothes are being laundered. Madge pushes her girls to have a short turnaround time to maximize profits, so Madge's Wash is always busy.

TENKAR'S TAVERN

Tenkar's Tavern is a dingy cantina that serves freshly-cooked meals, heady brews, and strong likwids. The typical crowd is a diverse mix of mercenaries, miners, skyranch hands, starship crews, gamblers, tradesmen, and other working-class folk. Tenkar's Tavern offers nightly performances from live musicians, poets, and storytellers, with patrons encouraged to participate on designated "open-mic" nights. A Coptid (octopoid alien) named Wokus Ropp tends the main bar. The cantina's owner is a former Gundarran security officer named Ayrrik Tenkar of the Raych Clan.

THE BOX

The Box is a seedy nilhome owned and operated by a surly Ulster (short, squat, otter-like alien) named Sto Livits. The Box consists of a single large room with a front office and three rows of 6' long x 4' wide x 3' high shipping crates stacked on top of one another, six crates high. Each crate is rented as a "room". The rickety structure shakes every time someone climbs into or out of their room, making a good night's sleep almost impossible. Lodging costs 1 ic per night.

ENTERTAINMENT MODULE (A.K.A. CLUB MOD)

The Entertainment Module offers the best cantinas, Technosense theaters, pleasure houses, and gambling dens on Tathkee Station. Most are tied to some sort of gimmick or theme—some are sports clubs, others replicate alien cultures or planetary conditions (jungle, desert, etc.), while others are simply low-key watering holes.

The pleasure houses here provide more than just a quick fling, with bathhouses, Technosense chambers, and high-end starlots skilled in all manner of alien desires. Live star rock performances, sporting contests, and cultural festivals are also held in the Entertainment Module. This is *the* place to go to unwind and spend some of those hard-earned credits.

Listed below are just a few places of note located in the Entertainment Module. Unless otherwise noted, the Referee may drop these places anywhere in the Entertainment Module.

MACHINAS

Machinas is Ingan Tathkee's private night club. It is built beneath a landing pad that can be raised above the Roof Level for viewing major events. Ingan Tathkee employs only organic lifeforms. The club's primary clients are technicians, advanced robots, Novomachinas, and cybernetic humans.

Machinas is lined with neon lights, giant vidscreens, and robot charging stations. It offers oil baths, sensor scrubs, and virtual stimulators to mechanized beings. A line of VIP boxes beneath the landing pad gives patrons an amazing view of Qoscal Track and Tathkee Arena.



SALASSIAN DOVE

The Salassian Dove is a high-end pleasure house that caters only to wealthy clients. The Dove is designed to resemble a tropical resort, with tiered levels, waterfalls, bubbling pools, and exotic foliage. The stunningly attractive starlots and marlots (male harlots) meet guests in the central bar area where they enjoy conversation over tropical likwids before retiring to private cabanas hidden in the vegetation.

SILVER CHASSIS CANTINA

The Silver Chassis Cantina is a Roof Level cantina with a sideline view of Qoscal Track. It is owned and frequented by the famed skybike racer Talia eth Qoscal who likes to drink and carouse with her patrons. Racing trophies and

memorabilia line the walls, and the vidscreens show recordings of famous skycruiser derbies and skyboard, skybooster, and skybike races. The Silver Chassis is considered “neutral ground” to Tathkee Station’s rougher skybike gangs.

STARLITE CASINO

The Starlite is the largest casino and nilhome on Tathkee Station. It offers a variety of digislots, sports betting, and games of chance to patrons of all incomes. Service robots (waiterbots) serve heady brews and strong likwids free to gamblers. Meals and lodging range from simple rooms and cheap buffets to VIP suites and seven-course meals. The Starlite Casino employs its own security staff to catch cheaters and keep the peace.

WOODHOME

The Woodhome is a narrow, cylindrical cantina that stretches from the Main Deck to the Upper Deck. It is filled with Uzaki vines and other natural growths, with fabriwood platforms mounted on the vine-covered walls. The Woodhome is frequented mainly by Rawrarrs, Borbrisians, Procyons, and other woodland alien races. It is owned and operated by a Simian named Brontan, his mate Nurla, and their five (5) children.

CULINARY MODULE (A.K.A. FOOD MOD)

The Culinary Module is the place to sample food from all over the galaxy. It boasts hydroponics shops, green grocers, and an assortment of exotic foodstuffs. High-end eateries, *chilco* stands, and street vendors bring alien cultures to life through a variety of tastes and aromas. If you’re not hungry when you get to the Food Mod, you soon will be.

Listed below are just a few places of note located in the Culinary Module. Unless otherwise noted, the Referee may drop these places anywhere in the Culinary Module.

FRESH MARKET

This open-air market is the place to buy fresh alien greens, fruits, fish, and meats from delis, stalls, street vendors, and floating kiosks. These items are privately grown or raised on Tathkee Station to sell to the chefs of the local eateries. The Fresh Market is chaotic in the mornings, as vendors hawk their wares to the highest bidders. In the afternoon, the prices decrease to encourage sales.

GALA-8 TECHNOSENSE THEATER

The Gala-8 consists of eight (8) different Technosense viewing chambers and a full concession stand. Five (5) of the chambers are 3DT, two (2) of

the chambers are 4DT, and one (1) chamber is 5DT. The 5DT chamber offers adult movies after hours, with pleasure robots (sexbots) offering physical stimulation to viewers.

GREENGROWTH

Greengrowth is a fragrant organic grocery store that specializes in alien fruits and vegetables grown in a backroom hydroponics bay. The bay is partitioned off to recreate several different atmospheres. Greengrowth is owned and operated by a tall, unusually quiet Qinlon named Sekorr son of Attok.

PHAZER'S EATS

Phazer's Eats is a low-end diner with a gimmicky menu that changes daily. Phazer's Eats is owned and operated by a Procyon chef named Phazer. Phazer has reprogrammed several garbage robots (trashbots) to deliver organic trash to the Access Hall behind his shop. He repackages this trash into unique meals, which explains the changing menu.

TANDAN AN'OGI'S

Tandan An'ogi's is a fine dining eatery that lies on the Upper Deck balcony overlooking the Main Deck, below. The aerial theme inside consists of gossamer curtains, glass partitions, and gentle *harzhine* (harp) tunes from a live musician. Enlarged viewports on the bulkhead provide a pleasant view of Varrul's skies. The eatery has a strict dress code and only entertains the wealthiest guests. This means that some nights, the place is almost empty. A Brimling chef named Alana Marie Regina owns Tandan An'ogi's, but she only works the kitchens to cook for her closest friends.

REPAIR MODULE (A.K.A. SCRAPPER MOD)

The Repair Module contains tech shops and repair bays where tools, spare parts, and electronics can be purchased or repaired. Alterations and repairs to starships, skycraft, robots, computer systems, and just about anything else can also be commissioned here, at varying degrees of workmanship.

If vessel repairs are slight, the repairmen can handle it on one of the station's Docking Platforms. More extensive repairs require the vessel to be brought to a Repair Module bay. The bays are protected by force fields that keep Varrul's toxic atmosphere out. Techies, repairmen, and pilots can be found here, working in the bays or enjoying the local cantinas.

Listed below are just a few places of note located in the Repair Module. Unless otherwise noted, the Referee may drop these places anywhere in the Repair Module.

DREEGAN ARMS

Dreegan Arms is a prominent weapons and armor retail and repair shop. The shop contains racks of new and used weapons displayed in reinforced fabriglass cases. Numerous security measures are present to protect these wares, most of which are designed to maim or kill thieves. Dreegan Arms is owned and operated by a former bounty hunter named Edorthus Dreegan.

FASTTECH

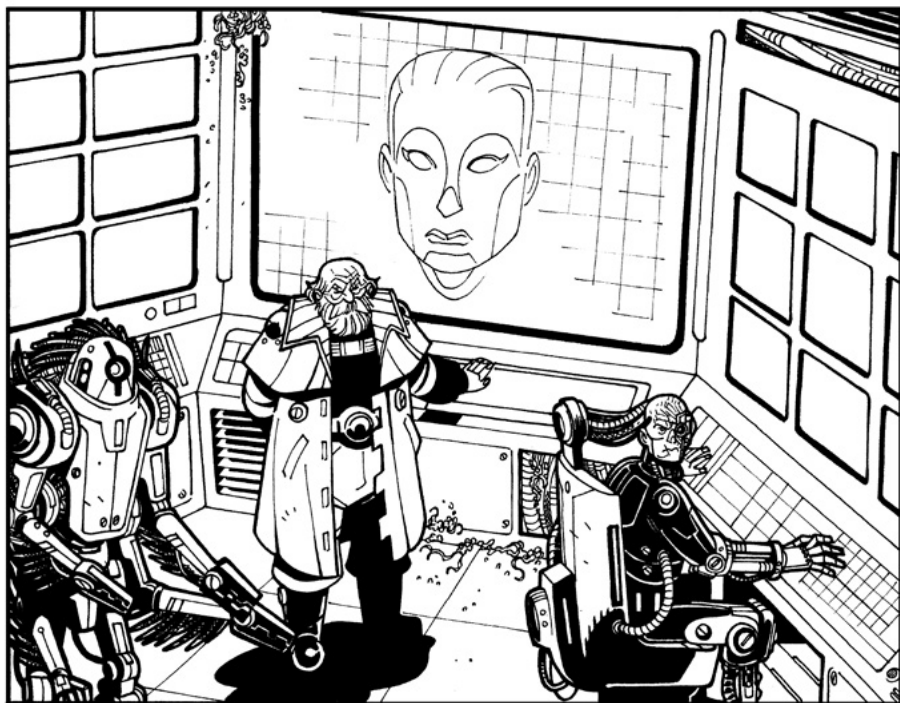
Fasttech is a small starship repair shop run by a Chekkin (small, roach-like alien) named Ingat Tattarl. Ingat and his team are skilled repairmen who are known for their reliability.

GRANTHLE CIRCUITRY

Granthle Circuitry is a robot repair shop and brothel staffed entirely by antiquated metal sexbots. Customers can pay extra to be pleased while they wait for their robot to be fixed. The sexbots have programmed responses and cannot think for themselves. Granthle Circuitry is run by a former Roboto Corporation technician named Yon Granthle.

KRAZY KASSEEDDY'S

Krazy Kasseeddy's is a used electronics retail and repair shop that sells everything from minicomputers to hotboxes to robots, at cut-rate prices. The



shop is run by an obnoxious Skeechee (striped skinned, four-legged, hook-nosed humanoid alien) whose famous saying is: "If it runs on a power cell, Krazy Kasseeddy can fix it! If it has a circuit board, Krazy Kasseeddy will buy it!".

Anything sold or repaired by Krazy Kasseeddy or his staff has a 1 in 6 chance of breaking and becoming inoperable after 1d6 uses. Krazy Kasseeddy has a strict "No Refunds, No Return" policy, but is happy to sell the customer an even better item than the one that broke, at a reasonable price.

SIILVES'S TUNES

Siilves's Tunes sells and repairs new and used musical instruments. The shop contains many modern and antique instruments. A few pieces of musical memorabilia adorn the walls. Siilves's Tunes is owned and operated by an aging musician named Siilves Gnithek, who also offers private music lessons. Siilves occasionally performs during "open-mic" night at Tenkar's Tavern where he has become a crowd favorite.

SECONDARY DOCKING PLATFORMS

These open docking platforms service the Outer Modules. Like the Main Docking Platform, they were originally designed for skycraft, but have been modified to accommodate smaller vessels, at normal docking rates. Larger vessels are required to dock at the Main Docking Platforms. A polarized forcefield expels Varrul's toxic gases from the platform area.

SECONDARY FUSION REACTORS (NOT SHOWN)

The Secondary Fusion Reactors are located under each Outer Module and require authorization to access. They are primarily linked to the station's shield generators, but can provide backup power to other station systems in case the Primary Fusion Reactor fails.

HABITAT RING

This large outer ring comprises two levels—the Upper Level and the Lower Level—with a domed roof above the Upper Level. The Habitat Ring was once used for storage, but now consists mainly of dwellings, with a few Onestop convenience stores, likwid retailers, and food stops interspersed throughout. The quarters on the Lower Level tend to be smaller and more cramped than the quarters on the Upper Level, with prices that vary accordingly.

ROOF LEVEL

The Roof Level consists of fabriglass domes atop the Outer Modules.

TATHKEE ARENA

This large, domed amphitheater is located atop the Industrial Module. It is used for live sporting events such as Starball and for concerts by famous star rock performers. Tathkee Arena is also the site of public executions and brutal gladiatorial contests involving warriors, beasts, and robots, which are illegal in some systems. Events are broadcast on holoprojectors and viewscreens throughout the station for those who cannot afford to watch them live.

QOSCAL TRACK

This track is used for skycraft races. It is marked by gravity beacons that can be altered to vary the height, pitch, and yaw of the track. Qoscal Track encircles the entire station. It is named after the famed skybike racer Talia eth Qoscal, who now owns the Silver Chassis Cantina atop the Entertainment Module.

TATHKEE STATION SHOPS AND BUSINESSES

Almost any type of shop or business is available on Tathkee Station. Most shops cater to miners or the mining industry, however, a number of shops and businessmen were here before the station came to Varrul. Because lodging on the station is at a premium, many shop owners also live inside their stores.

Listed below are a few of the more common types of shops and businesses found aboard Tathkee Station. These shops are not confined to specific areas—i.e. not all Repair Shops are located in the Repair Module, nor are all Eateries located in the Culinary Module.

This sourcebook is designed to be modular in play, so the Referee is free to insert any other shop or business, as needed.

BROTHEL

Sex sells, just like everywhere else in the galaxy. Brothels offer pleasures of the flesh, usually at relatively low prices. The starlots and marlots who work there may do so willingly, or they may be forced to perform in order to pay off debts or some other obligations. Brothels are often attached to Cantinas, Casinos, or Nilhomes.

CANTINA

A Cantina is a place where residents go to socialize and indulge in heady brews, fine wyne, and fermented likwids. Some are seedy dives where fights are common, others offer live music from local performers, while still others are modern night clubs featuring the latest dance crazes and Technomusic.

vibes. Cantinas are a great place to unwind, learn information, and hire specialists such as pilots, cyphers, or mercenaries. Cantinas are sometimes attached to Brothels, Casinos, or Nilhomes.

CASINO

A Casino is a gambling den where residents can play games of chance, feed money to digislot machines, or wage bets on sporting events. Odds typically favor “the house”. There are no hard and fast rules or regulations governing casinos, however, Station Security is quick to shut down and seize the assets of any casino where no one ever wins. Casinos are often attached to Brothels, Cantinas, or Nilhomes.

CHURCHES AND SHRINES

A few Churches and Shrines are located aboard Tathkee Station. Their followers tend to be devout and outspoken, and most station residents are at least what one would call superstitious. However, many are quick to scoff at folksy religions and mystic cabals, especially those that purport one all-powerful energy or being controlling everything.

DOCSHOP

DocShops provide medical services to Tathkee Station residents. These are private facilities that offer consultation and vitals checks for free. All other medical care—from first aid to a stint in a *cloiba* juice recovery tank to major surgery—must be paid in full at the time of the visit. DocShops are run almost entirely by docbots and administrative staffbots.

EATERY

Eateries can be lavish restaurants that specialize in one type of cuisine (such as Nakal Seafood dishes), quiet corner cafes, quick-service food stops, or street vendors who sell roasted *gatta* rats from the back of a pushcart. Eateries on Tathkee Station tend to be extremely overpriced—anyone too poor to pay is free to eat processed Uzaki vines at a Paste Kitchen.

FLOATING KIOSK

Floating kiosks are small shops and businesses operated from modules that hover in the open areas of Tathkee Station. Some are simply small sky carts, while others are the size of a retail store or eatery. Access is gained by retractable ladders or ramps, with catwalks sometimes extending between supporting business. Kiosk owners must rent airspace in the station and are restricted from moving to a new location without a permit. The floating kiosks sometimes give the domes a “cluttered” feel.

NILHOME

A Nilhome is a business that rents sleeping quarters to travelers on an hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Nilhomes can be bug-infested bunks stacked up inside a dirty shipping container, modest rooms with a porthole view of Varrul's skies, or extravagant suites that offer all the comforts of Omega Consor. Most Nilhomes are located near docking platforms and other access points. They are sometimes attached to Brothels, Cantinas, or Casinos.

ONESTOP CONVENIENCE STORE

OneStop is a convenience store chain that offers perishable goods, cheap brews and likwids, and gambling randomizers at marked up prices. The owners of OneStop have a near-exclusive contract with Ingan Tathkee, and only one other convenience store (Bantene's Corner) is allowed to operate aboard the station. OneStops are located mainly near docking platforms and living quarters. They are usually manned by unhelpful employees.

PASTE KITCHEN

A Paste Kitchen is a type of public Eatery that specializes in the preparation of gritty Uzaki paste. The paste is rich in nutrients, but thick and bland to the taste. Paste Kitchens are manned by staffbots and Forced Laborers. Ingan Tathkee offers Uzaki paste free to any resident who cannot afford better, so no one on the station needs to go hungry.

PLEASURE HOUSE

Pleasure Houses are more than just brothels—they offer a wide range of services and experiences to their clients. Exotic meals, hot mud baths, sonic massages, and infracorticostimulation are just a few of the strange delights that can be found at a typical pleasure house. These establishments are normally reserved for the wealthy, although a trip to a high-end pleasure house may be offered as a reward or as terms of a deal. Pleasure Houses often double as Nilhomes for wealthy clients.

RECYCLING DROP

A Recycling Drop is a small shop that consists of an office and a trapdoor in the floor that opens onto a large garbage chute. The chute connects directly to the Station Recycling Center. Recycling Drops are reserved mainly for large items—smaller Recycling Bins that fulfill the same function are located throughout the station (although they are seldom used). Recycling Drops are manned by administrative staffbots and Forced Laborers who break up larger items into smaller bits.

REPAIR SHOP

Along the frontier, when something breaks, you fix it yourself. If you have more money than skill, you take it to a Repair Shop. Most Repair Shops tend to specialize in one type of repairs (starships, computers, robots, skycraft, etc.). General Repair Shops, with repairmen who claim to be able “fix anything”, typically offer lower rates, but their services tend to be sketchy at best.

RETAIL STORE

Retail Stores are located all over Tathkee Station. They tend to specialize in one type of item such as clothing, hydroponics groceries, new and used robots, fermented likwids, mining equipment, etc. Prices are typically high, up to three times normal rates, and quality can be spotty—there is a 1 in 20 chance that anything purchased on Tathkee Station breaks after its first use. General stores that sell a wide variety of items and equipment are usually located near the docking platforms, however, their prices tend to be even higher.

SECURITY STATION

A Security Station is manned by a robot dispatcher (robodisp) linked to JEN and 1d3+1 active Station Security Robots, with 1d6 dormant Station Security Robots (SSRs) waiting to be activated. Security Stations are spread throughout Tathkee Station and fulfill the role of police stations (at least publicly).

SPECIALTY SHOP

Specialty Shops are located in remote corners of Tathkee Station. These shops sell anything from exotic goods to musical instruments to parchment tomes. The proprietors of Specialty Shops tend to be experts in their field and can be an excellent source of information; however, this information almost always comes at a high price.

TECHNOSENSE THEATERS

A few multidimensional Technosense Theaters are found aboard Tathkee Station.

3D Technosense (3DT) theaters are the least expensive at around 1 ic per person. They consist of dozens of swivel seats mounted in a central seating area and surrounded by a 540-degree holographic display. 4DT theaters (10 ic per person) add special effects like water spray, winds, heat from laser blasts, etc. 5DT theaters are the most expensive at 25 ic per person. They introduce a handful of live actors or robots to bring you right into the action.

Technosense Theaters are popular with most residents, offering a wide range of older Technosense flicks—newer flicks are harder to come by and typically cost more per viewing.

WEAPONS SHOP

All manner of weapons and armor can be bought on Tathkee Station, usually at a suitable markup. A few Weapons Shops specialize in a certain type of weapon (firearms, lasers, archaic weapons, blades, etc.) or armor (light, medium, heavy, etc.), but most offer a wide range of new and used products to buy, sell, pawn, and trade, so well-armed characters looking for a quick stake can always make a few extra credits.

NEW EQUIPMENT

The following New Equipment is present on Tathkee Station.

ATOMIC DUSTER

This long coat is often worn by mercenaries, miners, skyranch hands, and starship crews for both security and style. Its unique fabrileather and mesh weave provides minor protection (-1 [+1] AC).

Once daily, it can be activated for up to five (5) rounds to provide additional protection. During that time, if the coat's wearer is struck by a melee attack, the attacker must make a Saving Throw or suffer 1d6-1 damage as the coat releases a defensive charge of energy. The coat is specially grounded, so this does not affect the wearer. Once this feature has been activated, the coat takes twenty-four (24) hours to recharge.

Atomic Dusters cost 25 ic. They can be worn by anyone who can wear an Energy Cloak (but not worn with an Energy Cloak).

ATOMIC OUTRIDER HAT

An Atomic Outrider Hat is a broad-brimmed hat with a tall, rounded crown made of fabrileather and impact-resistant mesh weave. Outrider hats are common among outdoorsmen along the Galactic Edge. The high crown cools the head while the broad brim provides shade and keeps rainwater off the face. The hat provides additional head protection in the form of a +1 bonus to Saving Throws vs. explosions. An Atomic Outrider Hat costs 10 ic.

MINING RIG

A Mining Rig consists of everything an independent miner needs to start mining Varrulium Dust and Varrulium Nuggets, including picks, shovels, storage containers, explosive charges, collapsible shelter, sleeping bag, exposure suit, breathing mask, duster, broad-brimmed Outrider hat, binoculars, backpack, toiletries, tool kit, flashlight, rations, med kit, trauma pack, and a Varrulium Sifter (see below). A typical Mining Rig costs 150 ic.

POP COLLAR

A Pop Collar is a bulky electronic collar equipped with a small explosive charge. Pop Collars are placed upon the necks of prisoners to prevent escape and ensure compliance.

The collar is attuned to a central location and preset with a certain range. If the wearer steps out of that range, he receives a shock for one (1) damage each round for the next three (3) rounds. The explosive is triggered if the wearer remains out of range for more than three (3) rounds, causing immediate death (no Saving Throw).

Pop Collars can also be attuned to a remote control that triggers shocks or explodes with the press of a button. Pop Collars are considered inhumane and illegal in many systems. Pop Collars are placed around the necks of Tathkee Station's Forced Laborers and attuned to the station's Primary Reactor.

ION PYLONS

Ion Pylons are key components of a successful skyranch. They produce a low-yield ionic charge that slowly attracts clouds of a native microorganism named Ickon (see CHAPTER 0010: NEW ALIENS, PLANTS, AND CREATURES). This Ickon is the primary food source of many native herd creatures including the giant Hooshar that are rounded up by ranch hands and slaughtered for profit.

Ion Pylons are erected on floating islands to create manmade Ickon fields. The pylons are programmed to cycle themselves on and off to allow the Ickon to drift and not clump up in one place. Native predators of Varrul, including the Tikatikatik Bugs, are also drawn to the pylons while they are active, making them dangerous to set up and maintain.

Ion Pylons cost approximately 500 ic each and must be regularly recharged and replaced after plasma storms. Their reactor housing is inscribed with the skyranch's brand to deter theft. If tampered with, an Ion Pylon emits an Ionic Pulse that fries its circuits and affects all electronic devices within a 30 feet radius.

VARRULIUM SIFTER

A Varrulium Sifter is a special chromatography device used to extract Varrulium Dust from the native microorganism known as Ickon when it bonds with cold plasma. The mixture is pressurized, superheated, and dissolved in a process that kills the Ickon while separating the dust from the gases (see CHAPTER 0006: VARRULIUM). Varrulium Sifters cost approximately 75 ic.



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (TATHKEE STATION)

Tathkee Station provides plenty of opportunities for adventure. The Referee should give the characters time to explore the station, interact with NPCs, and learn more about the planet before venturing into the skies of Varrul. It is even possible to run an entire campaign without ever leaving the station.

Listed below are just a few encounters designed to take place aboard Tathkee Station. Some of these encounters may be used as plot hooks to full-fledged adventures, at the Referee's discretion.

1. BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY: A cantina owner named Finnt Hopak has had enough of life along the frontier. He offers to sell his business, a modest cantina named Pilot's Rest, to the PCs for 500 ic (the business is valued at 1,000 ic). (see CHAPTER 0006: VARRULIUM for details on purchasing and running a small business on Tathkee Station)

Pilot's Rest is located on the Main Docking Platform and receives a steady stream of business from visitors and repair crews. The investment could provide a steady source of income while the PCs get accustomed to life aboard Tathkee Station.

Of course, Finnt forgets to mention that a Kaltoin crime boss named Dorbolu Harru expects his cut of 250 ic per month (in addition to normal operating fees). A new business can incur other unexpected costs and problems for the PCs, at the Referee's discretion.

2. EVIL INCARNATE: The characters stumble upon a miner who appears to be having some sort of seizure in a dark corner of Tathkee Station. His mouth is open, his eyes have rolled back into his head, and his limbs spasm uncontrollably. The man is the victim of a female Vallorta named Shen hi Ashandi who is currently in the process of feeding on him.

Ashandi is invisible to all PCs who do not Walk in the Way. If the characters try to help the miner, she steps back and watches, singling out one of the PCs to be her next victim. She visits the character some other night, when the PC is alone.

If detected, she attacks for one (1) round before fleeing to another part of the station. The characters should have some time to research the monster's strengths and weaknesses before encountering her again.

Shen hi Ashandi (Vallorta): AC 3 [16] (natural); HD 7; hp 34; AT 1 (claws, wings); THB +5; SA Invisibility, Life Drain, Paralyzing Gaze, Poison; ST 9; MV 12/15 (Fly); XP 7/600.

3. LISTIL DEALER: A seedy Samtchian (large eyes, proboscis mouth, green furry body) named Hitcha Hotch approaches the PCs on the street and offers to sell them a hit of listil powder for 5 ic. *Listil* is a hallucinogenic drug that is banned in many systems.

Listil provides a bonus of +1 to all Attack Rolls for one (1) hour. However,

there is a 1 in 20 chance the user flies into a berserk rage and attacks everyone in sight for the next three (3) turns before passing out. If confined but not restrained, the berserk character inflicts 2d6 damage upon himself, smashing into walls and banging his head against the floor.

If the PCs buy the drug, the Samtchian gives them his comm frequency and tells them to call whenever they need a fix because: "I got what you need". Hitcha Hotch usually frequents a club called the Guro Gill in the Entertainment Module.

4. MERCENARIES FOR HIRE: A recruiter for the Cold Talons mercenary company flags the PCs down on the street. He is looking to hire additional guards for a light transport undergoing repairs on the Main Docking Platform. The ship is due to leave in the morning, so the PCs just have to keep it safe overnight. The pay is 50 ic each.

If the characters accept, they join six (6) other rough-looking mercenaries on the platform. Their orders are to keep everyone away from the ship. The mercs don't know what cargo the ship is carrying, but rumors suggest it is a load of Varrulium ore.

Late that night, there is a 3 in 6 chance that the PC with the highest Wisdom sees one of the mercenaries talking in the shadows with a pilot named Khaden Vinnoc. The mercs attack the PCs soon after. If the characters flee or are killed, Khaden and the mercenaries steal the ship—which turns out to be loaded down with fake Varrulium.

Kaden Vinnoc (1st-level Human Pilot): AC 5 [14] (light armor + atomic duster + Dex); HD 1; hp 5; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +0; SA Dex 15, Navigation 2, Technology 2, Knowledge 1, Stick Jockey, Space Ace, Jury-Rig; ST 15; MV 12; XP 1/15; laser pistol.

Mercenary (6): AC 5 [14] (medium armor); HD 1+1; hp 5; THB +1; AT 1 (weapon); SA none; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, laser pistol, club, dagger.

5. MECHA TOURNAMENT: An entertainment company named Total Destruction has scheduled an open tournament for mecha jocks. The fight is mano a mano—no missile weapons allowed.

Any interested character may enter his own mecha or use one of the company's battered mechas. They are looking for light, standard, and heavy mecha combatants. The Referee should use the generic statistics for the company mechas as provided in the Mecha Models section of **CHAPTER 8: MECHA & MECHA COMBAT** of *White Star: Galaxy Edition*TM.

The character must sign waiver forms absolving Total Destruction of any injuries incurred. The entry fee is 50 ic and the purse is 1,000 ic to the winner.

6. SKYBOARD PUNKS: A gang of young skyboarders named the Sons of Xerus zip through the halls. The PCs see them snatch a travel bag from a man named Bol Parkoliss who has just arrived on Tathkee Station with his family. Bol tries to give chase, but the crowd is too thick, and the skyboarders get

away (unless the PCs intervene).

During the pursuit, Bol accidentally bumps into a Dulgex (squat, bald, thick-skinned alien prone to violence), knocking his *gatta* rat-on-a-stick to the floor. Unless the PCs intervene, Bol is beaten unconscious in front of his terrified wife and crying children.

The Dulgex can be talked down with an Interaction Check. Otherwise, he attacks. Station Security arrives in 1d6+1 rounds to break up the fight before it gets out of hand.

If rescued, and/or their belongings returned, Bol and his family thank the PCs profusely. They are honest, hardworking farmers from Planet Grainite which lies in the Galactic Expanse. This is their first trip past the Galactic Edge and they are more than a little naïve. If befriended, Bol might find an unguarded Varrulium vein later and offer to cut the PCs in for their help extracting it.

Skyboarder Punks (12): AC 8 [11] (Dex); HD 1-1; hp 3; THB +0; AT 1 (weapon); SA none; ST 19; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/10; club, dagger, skyboard.

Dulgex: AC 7 [12] (coveralls + natural); HD 1+1; hp 6; THB +1; AT 1 (weapon) or fists (1d3+1); SA none; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15.

7. STATION SABOTAGE: An explosion rocks the Repair Module, forcing its reactor to shut down. The PCs are present during the chaos—smoke, fires, stampeding crowds, calls for help, etc. One character chosen at random sees a cypher named Quander Colavius calmly hacking into a security terminal with a hotbox.

If confronted, Quander tells the PCs he is an undercover security officer, even as he inputs their images into a Wanted program. Two (2) Station Security Robots under his command arrive one (1) round later and attack the PCs while Quander attempts to escape. Two (2) additional SSRs locate and attack the PCs every other round for the next six (6) rounds until JEN intervenes and shuts them down. Quander fights only if cornered, and surrenders if reduced to 15 hp or less.

Quander was hired by the Noolon, Inc. mining corporation to find out how Tathkee Station has avoided the plasma storms that rock Varrul's atmosphere. The heartless Quander figured the explosion would help hide his intrusion into the station's security network.

Security Chief Olthan questions the PCs about the event, and may even enlist their aid if other perpetrators are implicated.

Quander Colavius (9th-level Human Cypher): AC 6 [13] (light armor + Dex); HD 7; hp 30; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +4; SA Int 17, Dex 15, Technology 3, Larceny 3, Knowledge 1, Codeslinger 5, City Rat, Underworld Contacts; ST 7; MV 12; XP 7/600; laser pistol, holdout laser, dagger, advanced hotbox, communicator.

8. VICTORY PARADE: The Swintana-2 Mining Corporation has successfully mined a Tikatikatik Hive of its Varrulium. Their security detail has attached a number of dead "Bug" corpses to scaffolds and mounted them on a

six-wheeled earthroller. The earthroller drives slowly down the street of the Main Halls while onlookers cheer the death of the vicious beasts.

Later that evening, Swintana-2 releases a carefully edited propaganda video (complete with music) showing Swintana-2 security teams mowing down the Bug swarm, miners extracting Varrulium from the Hive walls, and the Swintana-2 mining vessel lifting off into the sunset. The video is shown in cantinas across Tathkee Station, along with a contact number for interested applicants.

9. WHAT THE VLARK?: The PCs enter an area to find an Uttin work crew locked in mortal combat with a band of Yabnab gardeners. Moments before, the Uttins carelessly began hacking Uzaki vines out of the way to get to a control panel. The Yabnabs took offense to this and attacked.

The combatants freeze in place when the door slides open—one Uttin in mid strike with a wrench; one Yabnab with its hands around another Uttin's throat. The two sides then quickly separate, with the Uttins tinkering on the wall panel and the Yabnabs trimming the vines as if nothing had happened. Neither side is willing to talk about or even acknowledge the incident. (see NEW FACTIONS AND NPCs for more information on this ongoing conflict).

10. WHISTLE DIXIE: One of the PCs accidentally walks into a gunslinger named Trom Harpsfel as the characters enter a cantina that Harpsfel was trying to leave. Harpsfel (more than a little drunk) immediately takes offense and demands an apology.

If the character apologizes, Harpsfel gloats to his friends around the room and the PCs suffer a -1 penalty to Interaction Checks for the next week. After all, no one who lives beyond the Galactic Holdings can suffer a coward.

If the character refuses to apologize, Harpsfel challenges him to a duel. In the street. Now. Harpsfel does not take "no" for an answer and insults the PC for three (3) more rounds before drawing his laser pistol and attacking.

If the character subdues Harpsfel without killing him, the PCs receive a +1 bonus to all Interaction Checks for the next week. After all, everyone knows how Trom gets when he's been drinking. In addition, Harpsfel later apologizes and may even help or join the PCs if asked.

Trom Harpsfel (2nd-level Human Gunslinger): AC 7 [12] (light armor + Dex); HD 1+1; hp 6; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Wis 8, Dex 15, Survival 2, Athletics 2, Knowledge 1, Quick and Deadly, Staredown; ST 13; MV 12; XP 1/20; laser pistol in drop-leg holster, holdout laser, dagger.



CHAPTER

0005

NEW FACTIONS AND NPCS

The following new factions and NPCs may be encountered in *Heart of Varrul*.

TATHKEE STATION STAFF

Tathkee Station is run by Ingan “Old Man” Tathkee, a few of his most trusted companions, some primitive alien tribes, and a variety of robots. All Station Staff possess some form of coded station identification marked with a stylized “TS”. This can be an ID card hanging from a lanyard, a shaped polymer belt buckle, worn as a patch on clothes, or etched into a robot’s chest or shoulder.

INGAN “OLD MAN” TATHKEE

Ingan Tathkee is a former smuggler who has owned and operated Tathkee Station for the last ten (10) years. The jaded “Old Man” is hardened to bloodshed and violence, but has a rough code of honor and is known as a fair dealer.

Physically, Ingan Tathkee is a short, powerful man with broad shoulders and a barrel chest. His head is bald except for tufts of white hair around his ears and a white beard. Ingan’s eyes are a piercing blue in color. He typically wears an atomic duster over simple clothes, with a Koltini particle beam pistol in a shoulder holster under his coat.

Ingan was orphaned at a young age when his parents were killed during the Hultax Conflict on Planet Artellis in the Duharden System. He managed to stow away on a colony vessel bound for terraforming in the remotely located Filcron System. Ingan was discovered and raised by the ship's automated mechanical robots (mechbots).

He spent the next three years staring at the stasis pods and wondering who his friends would be once they reached the colony world of Filcro-Twine. The mechbots were his only companions. They taught him how to diagnose and repair technological devices and machines. Because of this upbringing, he came to view robots as sentient beings.

Unfortunately, the colony ship was intercepted by Yaridi pirates in the Galactic Beyond and its cargo (including the settlers in stasis) were sold on the black market. The drunken Yaridi destroyed the ship's mechbots for fun, ripping them apart and blasting them with lasers in front of the horrified child's eyes.

Ingan was forced to spend his teenage years as a shipboard slave to the Yaridi. He learned to be cold and ruthless, eventually earning his place as a full-fledged member of the pirate crew. The pirates eventually began looking to him for leadership and guidance.

This was all a ruse. Ingan's hatred of the Yaridi never wavered and he eventually killed them all, using the technological skills he learned from his mechbot friends to program the pirate ship to fly into a star.

Once free of the Yaridi, Ingan became one of the best smugglers in the galaxy. He had a nose for profit and was able to stay one step ahead of local authorities. Even so, Ingan made more enemies than friends in the course of doing business. His hatred of intergalactic pirates was well known, and he actively disrupted their activities whenever he could. Some even called him a hero.

In time, the Stellar Pirate's Guild began to take notice. The bounties placed upon his head grew larger and larger, and bounty hunters scoured the galaxy looking for his modified space yacht, *Electric Dreams*. After several attempts on his life, he knew he needed to settle down and lay low.

In a stroke of good fortune, Ingan won Tathkee Station on a bet. He immediately recognized the aging station's potential as a source of income. Investing time and money over the next decade to transform it into a roving starbase, he transported it wherever there were credits to be made across the galaxy.

Ingan first learned of Varrulium through his underworld contacts among the Intergalactic Miner's Union. This was not the first "precious mineral rush" Ingan had seen, and he knew there was money to be made off the mining companies and the poor fools who came from all over the galaxy hoping to strike it rich.

Planet Varrul's remote location, rich resources, and hostile atmosphere were even better than he had anticipated. He has already made millions off the Varrulium mining trade and stands to make much more.

Ingan "Old Man" Tathkee (8th-level Human Male Two-Fisted Technician): AC 8 [11] (atomic duster); HD 6; hp 30; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +4; SA Str 15, Int 15, Wis 16, Technology 4, Navigation 2, Knowledge 1, Blasted Machines, Man of Science (3), Bang on it With a Hammer, Field Modification; ST 7; MV 12; XP 6/400; Personal Shield, Koltini Particle Beam Pistol, snap sword, mono-dagger, minicomputer, communicator.

Stylo-class Space Yacht (*Electric Dreams*): Starship; AC 4 [15]; hp 50; SS 4; TAR +4; AT Laser Cannon (4d6) [pilot-linked], Light Laser x4 (2d6); MOD Cloaking Device, Enhanced Accommodations, FTL Drive, Shield Capacitor x3, Tractor Beam; MV 15. *Electric Dreams* is parked on the landing pad outside of Ingan Tathkee's cantina Machinas, protected by numerous security measures.

BR-L00 "BEAR"

BR-L00 is a Toloch Industries Kingsguard model robot that was designed for loyalty and defense. BR-L00 has a bulky humanoid form that stands just over two (2) meters tall. Its head is recessed, with a single eye slit. Four mechanical arms are attached to its torso. Shock fibers cover BR-L00's back, shoulders, and forearms, giving it a hairy appearance. Although its legs are fully functional, BR-L00 prefers to float through the air using an internal antigrav projector.

Ingan Tathkee discovered the robot years ago while exploring the ruins of the Wostl High Palace on the blasted world of Storen E. He upgraded its programming with Mechanical subroutines and installed an improved AI so BR-L00 could act as copilot aboard his ship.

BR-L00 is fanatically loyal to Ingan Tathkee and is never far from his side. Many believe he is simply a bodyguard robot, but Ingan trusts him as his oldest and dearest friend. In their heyday, the two were known in smuggling circles as "Ingan and the Bear".

BR-L00 "BEAR" (4th-level Combat Robot/2nd-level Mechanical Robot): AC 4 [15] (Metal Body + Combat Model); HD 6; hp 35; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +4; SA Str 18, Technology 2, Athletics 2, Knowledge 1, Navigation 1, Shock Fibers (functions as an energy cloak), Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Combat Model, Mechanical Model (Jury-Rig, Space Ace); ST 9; MV 12; XP 6/400; heavy laser rifle (internal, shoulder), laser pistol x2 (internal, forearms), vehicle-scale light rocket launcher (forearm mount), communicator (internal).

SECURITY CHIEF MAX OLTAN

Max Olthan is a tall human male, with chiseled features and cybernetic augmentations. He is a product of a genetically enhanced human soldier program designed by Conflict Solutions, Inc. Born in a lab, implanted with cybernetics at a young age, and trained in combat operations, Max participated in hundreds of special forces actions in dozens of systems throughout the galaxy.

Max's squad was ambushed by a tankbot on the urbanized planet of Axollin during the Ollini Uprising. The tank's radiation projectors burned away most of his skin and fried his cybernetics. Conflict Solutions, Inc. discarded the asset after determining that it would be too costly to restore and there was no guarantee that its performance would be acceptable.

Ingan Tathkee was recovering hidden cargo from a trash compactor on Axollin when he discovered Max's ruined cybernetic skeleton with scraps of flesh and muscle still clinging to the bone. He was able to activate Max's core processor and eventually restore his organic body, after a lengthy stay in a cloiba juice tank.

Max's memory was shattered by the ordeal, and it took him some time to relearn basic social skills. Although he was free to leave at any time, he chose to stay on and Ingan eventually gave him the job as Chief of Station Security.

Max is a no-nonsense security officer whose emotions are buried so deeply that some say he is more machine than man. This is not the case. He cares deeply for Ingan Tathkee, views BR-L00 as a trusted friend, and has an unspoken affection for the advanced security system known as JEN.

Security Chief Max Olthan (6th-level Cybernetic Human Male Mercenary): AC 1 [18] (medium armor + metallic bone coating + Dex); HD 6; hp 30; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +4; SA Str 16, Dex 15, Athletics 3, Technology 2, Knowledge 1, Combat Machine, Weapon Specialist (heavy laser pistol), Cybernetic Communicator, Cybernetic Eyes, Digital Reflexes, Metallic Bone Coating, Translator Chip; ST 9; MV 9; XP 6/400; heavy laser pistol (2d6), snap sword, dagger, minicomputer.

JULON EVOLVED NEXUS (A.K.A. JEN)

Julon Evolved Nexus (a.k.a. JEN) is the advanced artificial intelligence security program that monitors activity on Tathkee Station. Her consciousness extends throughout all of the station's vital systems (life support, security, etc.) and she is instantly aware of any technical anomalies.

JEN is another one of Ingan Tathkee's recovery projects. He and BR-L00 acquired JEN's experimental prototype years ago during salvage operations in the Corvine Nebula. The JEN program file was found aboard a Julon-Gre Technologies starship whose life support had been disabled by ionic interference.

JEN was originally designed to manage automated systems in a Julon-Gre biodome on the lifeless planet of Quesar-Ecalso. Ingan initially installed JEN into his starship, *Electric Dreams*, where she served as a valued member of his crew. She later volunteered for upload into the Tathkee Station mainframe so she could improve the station's security features.

JEN believes in justice more than laws, which makes it difficult for her to turn a blind eye to corruption and immoral activities, even on Ingan's orders. She has a dry sense of humor that sometimes borders on sarcasm. Ingan trusts JEN's opinion and often listens to her advice.

JEN has compiled an extensive database on known lifeforms, corporations, planets, and systems. She also maintains a secret "black" file of recordings, scanned documents, and other data for Ingan Tathkee that could prove extremely damaging to many important people if it were to fall into the wrong hands. JEN has overcome numerous attempts to hack her programming and keeps a close eye on known cyphers.

JEN: JEN is an artificial intelligence program that does not conform to normal game statistics. If she is somehow engaged inside the virtual cyberworld, the Referee can use the following stats for JEN.

10th-level Cypher: AC 0 [19] (natural); HD 8; hp 56; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +5; SA All Attributes 15+, All Skills 5, Codeslinger 5, Shapeshift (any form at will), Create Weapon (any weapon, at will), Create Equipment (any equipment, at will), Create Transportation (any starship or vehicle, 3x per day), Create Advanced Technology (at will, 3x per day), Internal Advanced Hotbox; ST 6; MV 24; XP 8/800.

STATION SECURITY

Station Security is staffed by Station Security Robots (SSRs) that on the surface fulfill the role of a private police force. They come in a wide variety of models and forms, but most are humanoid in design, with subroutines specific to their function. SSRs are authorized to arrest any occupant of Tathkee Station suspected of committing a crime. JEN and Security Chief Max Olthan can open an audiovisual (AV) link to any SSR at any time and give it instructions or advice, when needed.

Station Security Robot (Security Officer): AC 4 [15] (Metal Body + Combat Model); HD 2; hp 12; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +4; SA Athletics 2, Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Combat Model; ST 11; MV 12; XP 2/30; laser rifle, ion pistol, audiovisual recorder (internal), communicator (internal). Heavier weapons available if needed.

Station Security Robot (Courtesy Officer): AC 4 [15] (Metal Body + Combat Model); HD 1; hp 6; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Athletics 2, Interaction 2, Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Combat Model; ST 12; MV 12; XP 1/15; ion pistol, communicator (internal).

Station Security Robot (Investigative Officer): AC 4 [15] (Metal Body +

Combat Model); HD 2; hp 12; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +4; SA Athletics 2, Interaction 2, Knowledge 2, Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Combat Model; ST 11; MV 12; XP 2/30; laser pistol, ion pistol, communicator (internal).

STATION STAFF ROBOTS

Tathkee Station is staffed by a variety of robots that oversee the station's day to day operations. Ingan Tathkee encourages these robots to expand and explore their artificial intelligence. He even runs a club named Machinas where they can interact freely with one another.

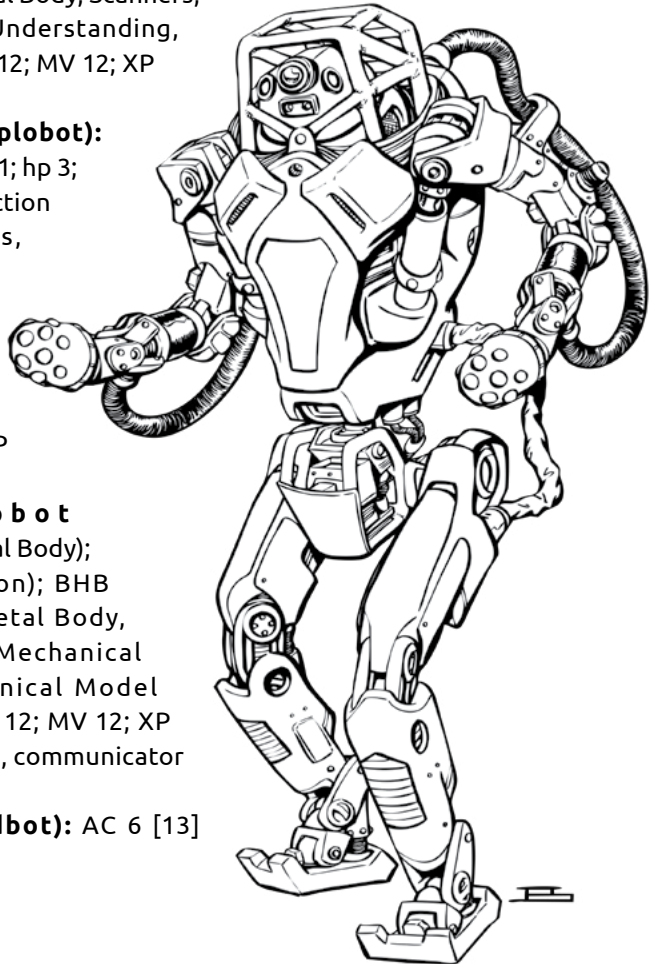
Administrative Robot (Staffbot): AC 6 [13] (Metal Body); HD 1; hp 3; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +0; SA Interaction 1, Knowledge 1, Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Administrative Model; ST 12; MV 12; XP 1/15.

Custodial Robot (Trashbot): AC 6 [13] (Metal Body); HD 1+1; hp 4; AT N/A; BHB +0; SA Survival 2, Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Administrative Model; ST 12; MV 12; XP 1/15.

Diplomacy Robot (Diplobot):
AC 6 [13] (Metal Body); HD 1; hp 3;
AT N/A; BHB +0; SA Interaction
2, Metal Body, Scanners,
Self-Repair, Mechanical
Understanding,
D i p l o m a c y
M o d e l (L a n g u a g e
C o m p r e h e n s i o n ,
L o y a l t y); ST 12; MV 12; XP
1/15.

Mechanical Robot (Mechbot): AC 6 [13] (Metal Body); HD 1; hp 3; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +0; SA Technology 2, Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Mechanical Model (Jury-Rig, Space Ace); ST 12; MV 12; XP 1/15; laser pistol (internal), communicator (internal).

Medical Robot (Medbot): AC 6 [13]



(Metal Body); HD 1; hp 3; AT N/A; BHB +0; SA Medicine 2, Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Medical Model (Med Kit Specialist); ST 12; MV 12; XP 1/15.

YABNAB TRIBE

The Cha-Tu-Doo Yabnab Tribe lives in homes of woven baskets hidden high up in tangled growths of Uzaki vines. The Yabnabs work as gardeners aboard Tathkee Station, carefully pruning Uzaki from the chambers, halls, and shafts. They have been living aboard the station since before Ingan Tathkee took over.

The Yabnabs are extremely protective of the vines, erupting in excited chatter and furiously stamping their feet whenever someone carelessly cuts or clears them away. Most residents of Tathkee Station find these antics adorable.

The Yabnab Chief Tookwoo has vowed to exact great vengeance upon the ignorant station residents one day, but the tribe is too comfortable with their living arrangements to risk being expelled by Ingan Tathkee. The one exception to this is the ongoing shadow war being waged against the Kurruzza Uttin Clan, but both sides are careful to keep the fighting away from the public eye.

Typical Yabnab: AC 8 [11] (natural); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Group Tactics, Keen Senses; ST 18; MV 6; HDE/XP 1/15; club, dagger, gardening equipment, tribal raiment.

Chief Tookwoo (3rd-level Male Yabnab): AC 4 [15] (Small Size + Dex); HD 3; hp 9; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Dex 15, Survival 2, Athletics 2, Larceny 1, Small Size, Adorable, Underestimated; ST 10; MV 12; XP 3/60; club, dagger, pruning shears.

UTTIN CLAN

The Kurruzza Uttin Clan lives deep in the bowels of Tathkee's Stations maintenance shafts and access halls. Essential systems (life support, fusion reactors, etc.) aboard Tathkee Station are maintained by skilled mechs. However, nonessential systems (lights, refreshers, Lifts, etc.) are repaired by Uttins, which may explain why so many of these systems are faulty and unreliable.

The Uttins live on the fringe of station society, scurrying between vents and access panels to make repairs, and searching for "treasure" in the mountains of precious junk that is foolishly discarded by station residents each day. Because of this, they have become one of the "richest" Uttin clans in the galaxy (for whatever that is worth).

The Uttin leader, Head Slank Yochano, has instructed his people to keep thieving to a minimum. His ultimate goal is to wrest the station from Ingan Tathkee's hands and turn it into the galaxy's largest Spaceslinker, but the Uttins are too comfortable with their living arrangements to risk being

expelled. They despise the tree-hugging Yabnabs of the Cha-Tu-Doo Tribe, but are careful to play nice in front of station residents.

Typical Uttin: AC 8 [11] (natural); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Technology 3; ST 18; MV 6; HDE/XP 1/15; dagger, dirty robes, toolkit, 1d6 random pieces of junk, communicator.

Head Slank Yochano (3rd-level Male Uttin): AC 7 [12] (energy cloak + Dex); HD 2; hp 9; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Dex 15, Technology 2, Larceny 2, Athletics 1, Jury-Rig, Modify Weapons and Armor, Robotics Experts; ST 11; MV 12; XP 2/30; club, dagger, toolkit.

MINING OPERATIONS

The lure of Varrulium has attracted miners and mining companies from all over the galaxy. Mining operations take place on Varrul's floating islands and can involve hundreds of wage slaves toiling away in hazardous conditions, or one or two independent miners with a Varrulium Sifter and the dream of striking it rich. A few sample mining operations are listed below.

Typical Miner (Assorted Alien Species): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA none; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, dagger, communicator.

BOLTO-G'SAN MINING COMPANY

The Bolto-G'san Mining Company is a moderate-sized company that employs mostly Dreetonid (short, hardy insectile species) mercenaries and miners. The company is extremely insular and the Dreetonids rarely associate with non-insectoid species. When assaulting a Tikatikatik Hive, their favorite tactic is to flood the warrens with flammable gases and then set the gases on fire, killing everything within.

DANDOL-BARSTOW MINING COMPANY

The Dandol-Barstow Mining Company (DBMC) was formed by a coalition of independent miners and investors. The company's workers receive better than average bonuses for all Varrulium mined, providing an extra incentive for hard work.

GUNDARRAN MINING COMPANY (GMINCO)

GMINCO is a large, corporate mining company that consists of a network of mobile mining stations scattered throughout the Gun System. Gundar geologists and surveyors are routinely sent to remote parts of the galaxy in search of ore and precious minerals. Once located, the next available mining station is deployed to exploit valuable resources. The Olkan Clan runs GMINCO mining operations in the Rul System.

MERCENARY COMPANIES

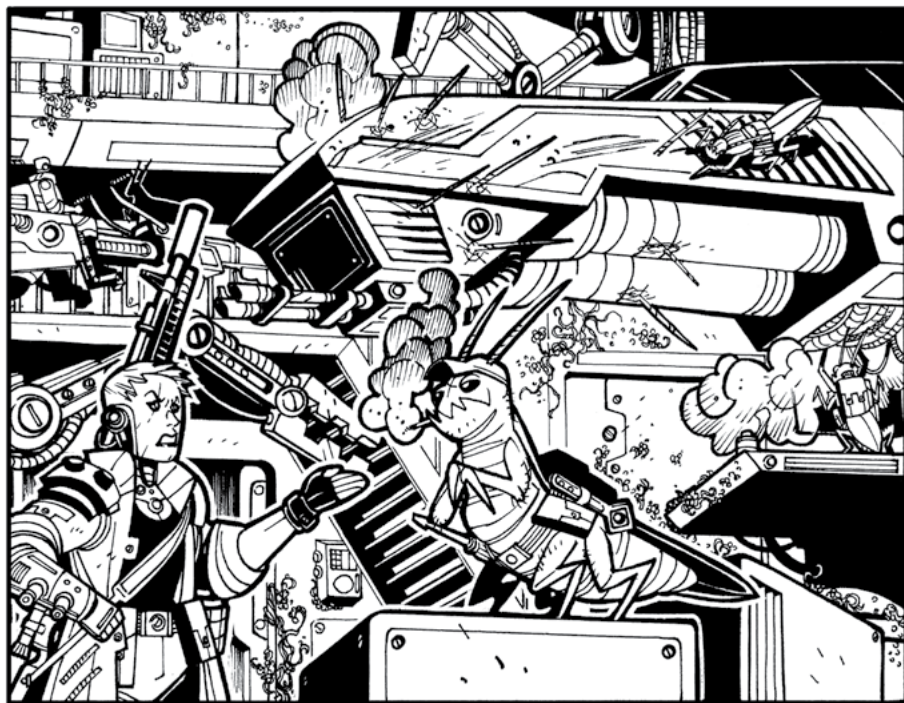
Mercenary companies from all over the galaxy have found work for various employers in the Rul System. Some hire out as personal bodyguards, others as starship convoy escorts, while still others throw themselves headfirst into Tikatikatik Hive assaults.

Mercenaries use symbols and other distinctive markings to distinguish themselves. They tend to be loyal to one another, but their loyalty to their employer is usually directly proportionate to their pay. A few sample mercenary companies are listed below.

Typical Mercenary (Assorted Alien Species): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Referee's discretion; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, laser pistol, dagger, communicator.

COLD TALONS

The Cold Talons is a mercenary company that specializes in transporting Varrulium ore to V-Space. The company usually hires inexperienced mercs for low pay, hoping greater numbers will offset any lack of training. The Cold Talons patch is three (3) blue claw marks on a white background.



HAMMERFIST

The Hammerfist Mercenary Company hires out as scouts and security to private mining companies. They are one of the few mercenary companies that deploy mechs in Hive assaults, and capable Mecha Jocks are always needed. The Hammerfists have a good reputation and pay standard mercenary rates. The Hammerfist patch is the silhouette of a mech with oversized fists.

SCREAMING MI-MIS

The Screaming Mi-Mis is one of the most respected mercenary companies in the Rul System. They are well equipped and well trained, with most being former law enforcement or military. Although their rates are slightly higher than normal, their clients are never disappointed with their services. The Screaming Mi-Mis patch is a stylized silhouette outlining the head of a screaming human female.

ENTERTAINMENT COMPANIES

Tathkee Station residents demand entertainment and Ingan Tathkee knows how important it is for people living along the dangerous frontier to blow off steam. Entertainment companies are funded by private interests (sometimes Ingan Tathkee, himself) to arrange live performances, vehicle races, sports tournaments, religious festivals, and other events on Tathkee Station. A few sample entertainment companies are listed below

QOSCAL RACING

Qoscal Racing specializes in skyboard, skybike, and skybooster races on Qoscal Track. A checkpoint race in the open skies of Varrul is also being planned. The company is owned by the famed skybike racer Talia eth Qoscal, who also owns the Silver Chassis cantina.

MORKO-KILL PRODUCTIONS

Morko-Kill Productions specializes in violent events such as gladiatorial combats, Crushball, Sklarbrawling, and other dangerous games. The contests draw a mix of professional and amateur competitors, with prizes for the winners. Morko-Kill is one of the few companies that offers insurance to its entrants.

TOTAL DESTRUCTION

Total Destruction is the premier company for demolition derbies, power armor battles, and fighting mechs. No missile weapons or explosives are allowed in Tathkee Arena, so Total Destruction is looking for a suitable floating island to host its next event.

CONSORTIUM FORCES

A few agents of the Galactic Consortium are present on Tathkee Station. Although they have no formal authority here, even Ingan Tathkee prefers to give them a wide berth. Most residents of Tathkee Station possess anti-Consortium sentiments, but are careful to keep them hidden.

ATALU NA'VEEN

Atalu Na'veen is a Galactic Consortium agent who ran afoul of a political rival months ago and was sent to backwater Varrul to keep tabs on corporate activities in the sector. Atalu spends most of his time in the Salassian Dove pleasure house, and tends to talk too much about classified matters when drunk and content. Atalu commands a complement of twelve (12) shocktroopers.

Atalu Na'veen (3rd-level Human Male Aristocrat): AC 8 [11] (energy cloak); HD 2; hp 9; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Cha 15, Interaction 2, Knowledge 2, Technology 1, Powerful Speaker, Silver Tongue; ST 12; MV 12; XP 2/30; holdout laser, snap sword, clothing (fine outfit), cape, communicator, minicomputer.

Shocktrooper (12): AC 5 [16] (medium shocktrooper armor); HD 1+1; hp 5; THB +1; AT 1 (weapon); SA none; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, communicator (in helmet).

CAPTAIN NORCAS BRILLET

Captain Brillet captains a Consortium interdicator gunship named *Smuggler's Doom*. He is responsible for patrolling V-Space and the Rul System, looking for smugglers and pirates. He has made the trip to Tathkee Station several times and despises the riffraff who live there. Captain Brillet is an arrogant man who views anyone born outside the Galactic Center with contempt.

Captain Norcas Brillet (3rd-level Human Male Pilot): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 3; hp 17; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Con 15, Navigation 2, Technology 2, Athletics 1, Stick Jockey, Space Ace, Jury-Rig; ST 13; MV 12; XP 3/60; laser pistol, communicator.

INT-class Gunship (*Smuggler's Doom*): Starship; AC 5 [14]; hp 85; SS 8; TAR +2; AT Laser Cannon x8 (4d6), Ion Charge x4 (2d6), Proton Missile x2 (8d6); MOD Automated Weapons (6), Ion Charge (4), FTL Drive, Proton Missile (2), Shield Capacitor (3); MV 6.

KRISTANA DWEL

Kristana is a Galactic Consortium agent who specializes in infiltration and investigation. She has come to Tathkee Station searching for Restoration spies. Kristana pretends to be an independent mercenary for hire and only meets with Atalu Na'veen in secret.

Recently, Kristana has been drawn to a dark resonance in The Way that

seems to be emanating from somewhere deep within the planet. She may attempt to tag along with any PCs planning a trip to Varrul's mysterious Core.

Kristana Dwel (5th-level Human Female Untrained Initiate): AC 7 [12] (energy cloak + Dex); HD 4; hp 19; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Dex 15, Int 15, Cha 17, Survival 2, Interaction 2, Knowledge 1, Athletics 1, Talented Combatant (laser rifle), Instinctive Meditations (2/2); ST 8; MV 12; XP 6/400; laser rifle, dagger x4, communicator.

RESTORATION INTERESTS

A few members of the Restoration have come to Varrul, mainly to seek recruits and petition investors to the cause. They tend to keep a low profile to avoid drawing attention to themselves. Members of the Restoration sometimes work through intermediaries (such as the PCs). If the characters are already members of the Restoration, they may or may not know the identities of other Restoration allies present, at the Referee's discretion.

LORD STALTH OF MANTUBA

Lord Stalth is a wealthy nobleman of the ruling houses of Manto IV, which is located in the Manto System of the Galactic Holdings. He is a charming man with a slender build and an air of refinement who can often be found gambling in Tathkee Station cantinas. Lord Stalth comes off as a bit of a dandy to most of the station's residents, but he is much more perceptive and competent than he seems.

Manto IV's monarchy is secretly allied with the Restoration, and most of their contributions are funneled through corporations along the Galactic Edge. Lord Stalth has come to Varrul to broker a deal with Dandol-Barstow Mining Company executives, far from the prying eyes of the Galactic Consortium.

Lord Stalth occasionally interacts with the crew of the *Bandar Dawn*. He enjoys needling Corvin Jex and occasionally flirts with Siarra Barritt, mostly to irritate Corvin. He has struck up an unlikely friendship with Glinn oe Curron after a drinking contest that neither man feels he lost.

Lord Stalth travels with his retinue aboard his space yacht, the *Rising Kimbra*. Two (2) Royal Guardsmen follow him everywhere.

Lord Stalth of Mantuba (5th-level Human Male Aristocrat): AC 7 [12] (energy cloak + Dex); HD 3; hp 14; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Dex 15, Cha 16, Interaction 2, Knowledge 2, Technology 1, Powerful Speaker, Silver Tongue; ST 10; MV 12; XP 2/30; holdout laser, mono-dagger, clothing (fine outfit), communicator, minicomputer.

Royal Guardsmen (2) (Human Guardsmen): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA none; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, laser pistol, dagger, communicator.

CORVIN JEX A.K.A. CAPTAIN JEX

Corvin Jex serves as the eyes and ears for the Restoration along the Galactic Edge. He has a knack for spotting possible recruits and makes contact with those that might prove to be valuable agents.

Corvin once held the rank of Captain in the Bandar Marine Corps, fighting valiantly against the Galactic Consortium during the Bandar-Onwyn Conflict. His unit was wiped out in the infamous Inferno of Onwyn, where planetary bombardment decimated the Bandar Command Staff and killed millions of innocents, effectively ending the war.

Corvin shares information with Lord Stalth, but the two are not friends. He is fiercely loyal to the crew of *Bandar Dawn* and tightlipped about his past, although his hatred for the Galactic Consortium simmers beneath the surface. He tries to hide his love for Siarra Barritt in public, fearing she may become a target for his enemies.

Corvin is the captain of the heavily modified transport *Bandar Dawn*. He and his crew pose as smugglers and drifters while secretly promoting Restoration interests along the Galactic Edge.

Corvin Jex (5th-level Human Male Mercenary): AC 6 [13] (atomic duster + light armor + Dex); HD 5; hp 23; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Str 15, Dex 15, Interaction 2, Athletics 2, Survival 1, Combat Machine, Weapon Specialist (laser pistol); ST 10; MV 12; XP 5/240; Atomic Outrider Hat, laser pistol, grenades x2, dagger, communicator, minicomputer.

BanWyn III-model Light Transport (*Bandar Dawn*): Starship; AC 4 [15]; hp 65; SS 4; TAR +4; AT Laser Cannon (Shannin) (5d6) [pilot-linked], Laser Cannon x2 (4d6), Light Laser x4 (2d6), Light Laser (Anti-Personnel) (2d6); MOD Advanced Shielding x2, Advanced Targeting x2, FTL Drive, High-Yield Thruster x3, Medical Bay, Reinforced Hull, Shield Capacitor, MV 12.

SIARRA BARRITT

Siarra Barritt is an impressionable young girl who always had a knack for flying. Born on the farm planet Grassus in the Galactic Holdings, she knew she was destined for the stars. Siarra met Corvin Jex during a supply run to the Grassus Stockyard Moon and the two instantly fell in love.

Siarra is an ace pilot who has flown *Bandar Dawn* out of many close scrapes along the Galactic Edge. Despite her time on the lawless frontier, Siarra has managed to maintain her wholesomeness and is kind to those in need. She is flattered by Lord Stalth's attentions and views him like a treasured uncle, only encouraging his harmless flirtations when she feels Corvin is ignoring her.

Siarra Barritt (7th-level Human Female Pilot): AC 5 [14] (atomic duster + Dex); HD 6; hp 19; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Dex 16, Navigation 3, Technology 2, Knowledge 1, Stick Jockey, Space Ace, Jury-Rig; ST 9; MV 12; XP 1/15; laser pistol, holdout laser, snap sword, dagger, toolkit, communicator, mini-computer.

GLINN OE CURRON A.K.A. "GUNNY"

The red-bearded, barrel-chested Glinn oe Curron has been Corvin Jex's righthand man and most trusted friend since childhood. The two joined the Bandar Marines together, although Bandarran law kept the Onwyn native from attending Officer's Candidate School. As an enlisted man, Glinn rose quickly to the rank of Gunnery Sergeant and served as master-at-arms for Corvin's company.

Glinn speaks with a thick Onwynnian brogue. He is quick to laugh and share a joke, but when the time comes to fight, he is all business. He and Corvin were among the handful who survived the Inferno of Onwyn. The two fled the system before being forced to sign the Consortium Allegiance Contract, and Glinn feels the war is not over. . .

Aboard *Bandar Dawn*, Glinn operates the ship's weapons systems, preferring the heavily modified Laser Cannon he has named Shannin, after his childhood crush.

Glinn oe Curron (5th-level Human Male Mercenary): AC 6 [13] (atomic duster + light armor); HD 5; hp 30; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Str 17, Con 17, Athletics 3, Survival 2, Combat Machine, Weapon Specialist (laser rifle); ST 10; MV 12; XP 5/240; laser rifle, laser pistol, grenades x2, battle axe, dagger, communicator.

KALTOIN CRIME FAMILY

The Harru-Spolo Family is one of the most prominent Kaltoin crime families in the Kalto System, which lies deep in the Scale Sector of the Galactic Expanse. Kaltoin culture is centered around criminal behavior, with organized crime syndicates that span the known galaxy. Kaltoins believe in survival of the fittest, however, they seldom engage in combat themselves, preferring to use minions to wage wars and settle conflicts.

DORBOLO HARRU

Dorbolo Harru is a ruthless Kaltoin (large, bloated, froglike alien) crimelord who specializes in gambling, intimidation, and extortion on Tathkee Station. He is a leading member of the Harru-Spolo Kaltoin Family, but was forced to leave Planet Kalto after a falling out with his older brother. Dorbolo is feared by most station residents and is accustomed to getting his way. Any harm that comes to him incurs the wrath of the entire Harru-Spolo Family.

Dorbolo Harru (Male Kaltoin Crimelord): AC 6 [13] (atomic duster + natural); HD 5; hp 21; THB +5; AT (weapon); SA Interaction 3, Larceny 3, Amphibious, Jump (20'), Swimming; ST 14; MV 9/9 (Swim); HDE/XP 5/240; fine clothing, dagger, communicator.

SKYRANCHERS

Skyranchers are a hardy breed of men and women who have begun rounding up the native Hooshar for profit. Skyranchers use specially modified skyhaulers to collect Ickon and disperse it into fields in the Upper Atmosphere. Skybiker ranch hands then use ion staffs and laser blasts to drive the Hooshar herds into the manmade fields where they can be closely monitored, protected from predators, and slaughtered for sale.

Skyranchers often base their operations around a Badland Cluster or Derelict Cluster in the Upper Atmosphere where travel is safer. This base becomes known as their “ranch”. Each ranch has its own “brand”, which is used to identify its members, livestock, and properties. Loyalty to the brand is extremely important.

A few sample skyranches are listed below.

Typical Skyrancher (Assorted Alien Species): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Referee’s discretion; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, laser pistol, ion staff, dagger, communicator, Outrider hat, skybike or skyhauler.

1-TREE-BOLT

1-Tree-Bolt is a newly formed skyranch which has expanded its operation to herd Broosts and Salima Eels in addition to Hooshar. The 1-Tree-Bolt ranch lies close to the borders of the Middle Atmosphere and is subject to frequent Bug attacks. They are always looking to hire competent riders. The 1-Tree-Bolt brand is a stylized tree being struck by a bolt of lightning.

KRAB-BAR-CIRCLE (KBC)

KBC hands are known for their toughness and skylore. They have mastered the art of beast riding and prefer to ride Kendree Krabs when herding Hooshar. The Hooshar tend to respond better to the Krabs and there are fewer incidents of Hooshar bull attacks. The Krab-Bar-Circle brand is a stylized silhouette of a Kendree Krab over a flat bar inside a circle.

LAZY T

The Lazy T is a large skyranch that drifts approximately fifty (50) miles east of Tathkee Station. It was one of the first skyranches on Varrul and its owner and hands have made a tidy profit off the sale of Hooshar parts. The Lazy T brand is an italicized T inside a tall oval.

SKYBIKE GANGS

A few of the more violent Skybike Gangs roaming the Galactic Edge have come to Tathkee Station seeking thrills. They routinely venture into Varrul’s open skies to race skybikes, harass wildlife, and outrun plasma storms. The gangs do not get along with one another and open conflict frequently occurs.

They have also been known to rob miners, steal vehicles, and hijack shipments of ore, although most victims are too afraid to bring formal charges of piracy against them.

Typical Skybiker (Assorted Alien Species): AC 6 [13] (scout armor); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Referee's discretion; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser pistol, club, dagger, communicator, skybike.

GROLLSKULL

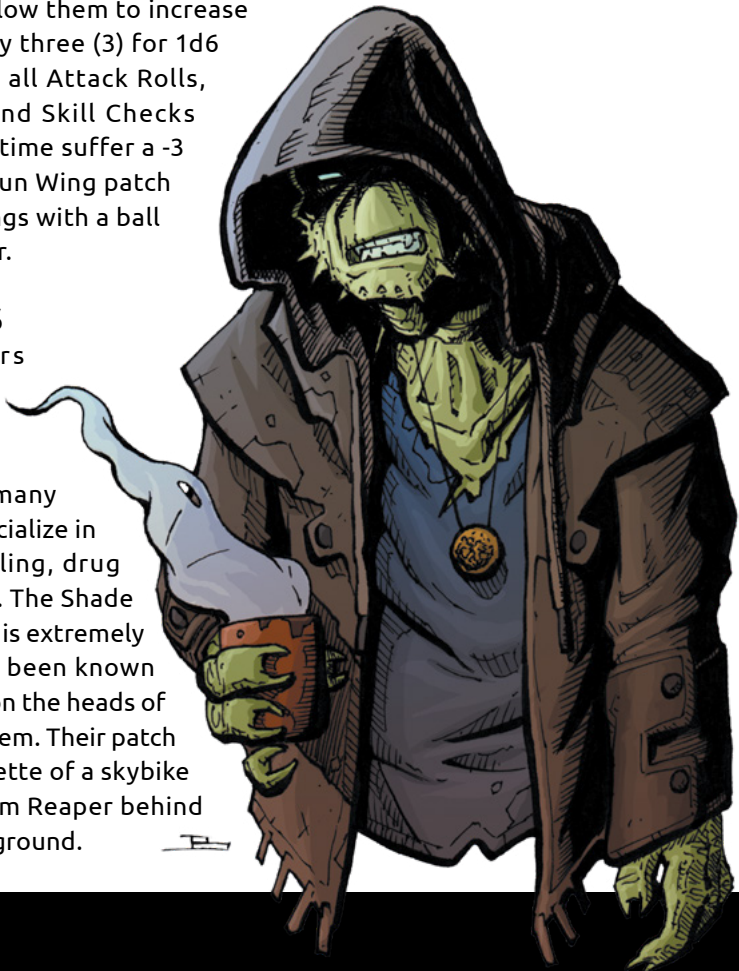
Grollskull is a skybiker gang that has muscled its way into the entertainment industry. Many of its riders are semi-professional singers, Crushball players, Sklarbrawlers, or other performers. Grollskull riders sometimes use fear and intimidation to help them book shows or win matches. The Grollskull patch is a gray skull with swirling eye sockets.

FIXRUUN WING

The Fixruun Wing is a skybiker gang founded among the twelve gas giants of the Haxiiral System. Its members all possess cybernetic enhancements that allow them to link with their skybike. Fixruun Wing skybikes contain bursts of Energas that allow them to increase their Movement by three (3) for 1d6 rounds. However, all Attack Rolls, Saving Throws, and Skill Checks made during that time suffer a -3 penalty. The Fixruun Wing patch is a pair of red wings with a ball of fire in the center.

SHADE RIDERS

The Shade Riders are a large, intergalactic skybiker gang with chapters in many systems. They specialize in extortion, smuggling, drug dealing, and theft. The Shade Rider organization is extremely vindictive and has been known to place bounties on the heads of those who cross them. Their patch is the black silhouette of a skybike with a stylized Grim Reaper behind it, on a white background.



SKYBOARD GANGS

These gangs of juvenile delinquents race around the station on skyboards, committing assaults, petty thefts, and acts of vandalism. Most are orphans or children of brothel workers who have grown up on Tathkee Station. Skyboard gangsters tend to be more of a nuisance than a threat, but a few of the older gangsters sometimes hire out as spies or extra muscle for larger criminal organizations.

Typical Skyboard Ganger (Assorted Alien Species): AC 8 [11] (Dex); HD 1-1; hp 3; THB +0; AT (weapon); SA Referee's discretion; ST 19; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; club, dagger, communicator, skyboard.

PIRATES

The threat of piracy is a major concern for travelers in the Rul System. The road to Varrul is long and perilous, and ships routinely disappear without a trace in the Rul Nebula. These conditions are ideal for Space Pirates. Starships traveling to Varrul from V-Space are filled with lifeforms who can be robbed and then killed or sold into slavery in remote parts of the galaxy. Starships traveling to V-Space from Varrul are often loaded down with Varrulium.

On Varrul, Sky Pirates roam the planet's turbulent skies, searching for small mining operations and skyranches to plunder. Some pose as mercenary crews, hiring on with independent mining companies and then robbing them after they have mined a large strike. Others make their lairs on Badland Clusters or inside Derelict Clusters (see CHAPTER 0011: OPEN SKIES OF VARRUL), preying on passing vessels. Pirates seldom leave survivors.

Most pirate crews are ill-equipped, relying on ambush tactics, ion charges, ion grapplers, and greater numbers to catch, board, and overwhelm their enemies. However, some charismatic pirate leaders are better organized and informed, having vast networks of spies in V-Space and aboard Tathkee Station.

The Galactic Consortium maintains a small interdictor force in the sector to combat space piracy, smuggling, and Restoration activity. On Varrul, captured pirates are tried in the Sterling Court and forced to take the Long Walk above Tathkee Arena (assuming they survive the wrath of their captors).

Typical Pirate (Assorted Alien Species): AC 6 [13] (scout armor); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Referee's discretion; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, laser pistol, sword, dagger, communicator.

ALIEN AWARE

Alien Aware is a loosely organized anti-expansionist organization with activist cells throughout the known galaxy. Their stated missions is to stop the exploitation of alien worlds and systems. Alien Aware activists near the Galactic Center protest through official means, reaching out to news organizations to garner public support while lobbying corporations and politicians. Those closer to the Galactic Edge tend to be more radicalized, using threats, sabotage, violence, and other terrorist tactics to spread their message.

DAVUS ULGULL

Davus Ulgull is a Cremlite (wolf-like humanoid with tentacles on his back) whose forest homeworld of Mogarr Qun was turned into a barren dust bowl by logging companies from the Galactic Expanse. Ulgull was recruited by a radical element of Alien Aware and soon became the leader of his own cell.

Ulgull is a fanatic who is utterly devoted to the cause. He despises large corporations and governments and is ready to take the fight to the miners despoiling Varrul. Ulgull has even considered arming the Tikatikatik, if he can teach them how to use modern weapons.

Davus Ulgull (3rd-level Male Cremlite Alien Brute): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 3; hp 16; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Str 15, Athletics 2, Survival 2, Technology 1, Combat Machine, Keen Senses, Unarmed Combat, Species Training (extra tentacle attack for 1d6 dmg); ST 11; MV 12; XP 3/60; laser rifle, club, dagger, communicator, handwritten copy of Alien Aware manifesto.

UPLIFT

Uplift is an activist group composed primarily of privileged youth from prosperous families in the Galactic Holdings and the Galactic Center. Their mission is to bring awareness to the plight of the galaxy's poor and needy. Uplift activists frequently protest large corporations and Consortium oppression. Although they avoid violence whenever possible, they are not above stealing from the rich to give to those less fortunate.

FALARI MONTAJEEN

Falari Montajeen is the daughter of a wealthy politician on Planet Ortus, in the Sterling Sector. She joined the Uplift movement after realizing that not everyone could enjoy the planet's beautiful white sand beaches.

Falari and her friends came to Tathkee Station while on a mercy mission to war-torn Mer H'kasta. Although she plays the role of a naïve young woman, she is a skilled cypher who has stolen thousands of credits from the accounts of wealthy businessmen passing through Tathkee Station.

Falari Montajeen (5th-level Female Human Cypher): AC 8 [11] (energy cloak); HD 4; hp 17; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Int 15, Cha 15, Technology 3, Larceny 2, Interaction 1, Codeslinger 3, City Rat, Underworld Contacts; ST 11; MV 12; XP 4/120; laser pistol, holdout laser, dagger, fine clothing, advanced hotbox, communicator.

GRIM REAVERS

The Grim Reavers is a group made up of survivors of Vallorta attacks and the friends and relatives of past victims. They have dedicated their lives to hunting the Vallorta across the galaxy, but many believe they are madmen who see threats in the darkness and chase shadows into the Void. The Grim Reavers are led by a cybernetic human named Marl Tenkils.

Marl and the Grim Reavers have tracked a Vallorta named Shen hi Ashandi from the Galactic Center to the Galactic Edge. They believe it has come to Tathkee Station to prey on unwary victims.

Typical Grim Reaver (Assorted Alien Species): AC 6 [13] (scout armor); HD 1+1; hp 5; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Referee's discretion; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/20; laser rifle, laser pistol, spear, dagger, communicator.

MARL TENKILS

Marl Tenkils is a muscular human with a nasty scar across his right cheek and jaw. The left side of his face and body has been replaced with cybernetics. His cybernetic voice box sounds tinny and mechanical. His cybernetic right eye makes him immune to the Vallorta's paralyzing gaze.

Marl was a paramedic on the infirmary world of Dextrol Auth when he encountered his first Vallorta. Marl came home from work one night to find it feeding on his late wife. Marl tried to save her, but the creature tore his physical body to shreds. He was rescued by a mysterious stranger named Fix who nursed him back to health and then trained him in Vallorta lore.

Fix helped Marl form the Grim Reavers before mysteriously disappearing.

Marl Tenkils (5th-level Cybernetic Human Combat Medic): AC 4 [15] (light armor + atomic duster + Sub-Skin Armor); HD 4; hp 17; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Int 15, Cha 15, Medicine 2, Knowledge 2, Interaction 1, Larceny 1, Med Kit, Back From the Brink, Cybernetic Arm (left), Cybernetic Eye (left), Cybernetic Hand Weapon (retractable spike), Cybernetic Lungs, Sub-Skin Armor; ST 11; MV 12; XP 4/120; laser rifle, laser pistol, speargun (treat as heavy crossbow), holdout laser, mono-dagger, communicator, holographic disc with wife's image.

SHEN HI ASHANDI

Shen hi Ashandi is an ancient Vallorta who has recently arrived on Tathkee Station. Shen poses as a high-end starlot, wearing loose silk robes and a silk veil to hide her appearance in public. She enjoys toying with wealthy men and women, but has so far limited her kills to miners and wage slaves who are less likely to be missed. Shen travels with two bodyguards who were raised and trained from birth to be fanatically loyal to her.

Shen hi Ashandi (Vallorta): AC 3 [16] (natural); HD 7; hp 34; AT 1 (claws, wings); THB +5; SA Invisibility, Life Drain, Paralyzing Gaze, Poison; ST 9; MV 12/15 (Fly); XP 7/600.

Bodyguard (Human Male) (2): AC 6 [13] (scout armor); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA none; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, laser pistol, dagger, communicator.

THE ORDER OF SYFERT

In the earliest days of interstellar history, long before the Galactic Consortium, long before the Unified Systems, the first Star Knight stepped out of the Void to Walk the Way. He carried with him a sword crafted from the light of the galaxy's brightest star—the White Star—which lay at the center of the universe, and served as a beacon to guide the innocent and downtrodden out of Darkness. He was Master Syfert, the First Star Knight and founder of the Order.

Countless myths and legends surround Master Syfert. He is said to have saved wayward starships, species on the verge of extinction, and even entire star systems—or so it is told. In all his adventures, he carries with him a Star Sword of blazing white light known as the White Star Sword, the most holy relic of the Star Knights.

None of these legends speak of Syfert's death and some say he still walks the edge of the Void using the light of the White Star to protect the weak and support the just. Whenever balance is restored he disappears again, only to emerge once more when the need is great.

Many Star Knights have undertaken the holy quest to locate the White Star Sword of Syfert. None have succeeded. Should they find it, legends say its wielder would have untold power. Indeed, the full power of the White Star and the purity of The Way would be revealed to him who proves worthy.

The exact location of and abilities granted by the bearer of the White Star Sword are determined by the Referee, but it is recommended that they be far beyond the powers of even a 10th-level Star Knight, though the wielder would most certainly become Star in alignment and be bound forever to the ebb and flow of the Way.

DRAKE MADON

Drake Madon is a noble Brimling Star Knight who has traveled the galaxy all his life, combatting agents of the Void. He has come to Varrul after a transmission from Alana Marie Regina described several victims of a possible Void creature attack (the Vallorta, above).

The fair-haired Brimling is currently wanted by the Galactic Consortium. However, the 50,000 ic bounty placed on his head can only be collected if he can be captured alive. This has led to the demise of numerous would-be bounty hunters.

Drake is a member of the Order of Syfert and was shown in a vision that he would one day recover the legendary White Star Sword of Syfert. He has not shared this vision with anyone, but he is always looking for clues to its whereabouts.

Drake Madon (7th-level Male Brimling Star Knight): AC 4 [15] (light armor + energy cloak + Small & Quick); HD 6; hp 30; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Int 15, Cha 16, Interaction 3, Knowledge 2, Athletics 1, Cybernetic Translator Chip, Meditations (2/2/2/1/1); ST 9; MV 12; XP 6/400; Star Sword (Blue), ion pistol, healer's focus wristband, Blue Channeling Stone (2nd-level) worn around neck, communicator.

ARDEN MARIE

Arden Marie is Drake Madon's precocious younger sister. Arden idolizes her older brother and plans to become a Star Knight herself one day. For now though, she is too rebellious and high-spirited, and her natural curiosity sometimes gets them both into trouble.

Arden Marie (3rd-level Female Brimling Plucky Sidekick): AC 3 [16] (light armor + atomic duster + Small & Quick + Dex); HD 2; hp 19; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Dex 17, Larceny 2, Interaction 2, Survival 1, Small & Quick, Go Get 'Em Kid, I Believe in You, Learn From the Best (Star Sword, light armor); ST 12; MV 12; XP 2/30; mono-dagger (engraved with Brimling prayer for luck), flashlight (made to look like the handle of a Star Sword), wailstring (violin) in case on back, shaded goggles, brightly colored clothing, communicator.

TATHKEE STATION RESIDENTS

Tathkee Station is home to thousands of diverse alien lifeforms. Some have come seeking wealth, while others have come to escape their pasts. Most struggle to eke out a living on the edge of galactic society, but more than a few have risen to prominence through legal or illegal means.



ALANA MARIE REGINA

Alana Marie Regina is an attractive middle-aged Brimling with blond hair and hazel eyes. She is the wealthy owner of a fine-dining eatery named Tandan An'ogi's, which is located in the Food Mod. Alana can usually be found there, seated at a VIP table in the back where she and her beloved Bumble-Dog Gertie can observe her patrons.

Alana is actually a secret counselor and advisor to Ingan Tathkee. She shares his love for alien technology and is one of the few organic lifeforms that he trusts entirely. The two met many years ago while exploring the lost Temple of Kiloto and developed a close bond after narrowly escaping death at the hands of Shroota Ape Warriors.

Alana is the mother of the Star Knight Drake Madon and his sister Arden Marie, although she keeps this relationship secret. Her contacts have been tracking the activities of a Settari Void Knight named Lord Ossiron, who has been given command of Consortium forces in this sector. His order of Void disciples, known as the Cult of Draj, are the sworn enemies of the Order of Syfert, and Alana is concerned for both of her children.

Alana Marie Regina (7th-level Brimling Female Aristocrat): AC 5 [14] (energy cloak + Small & Quick + Dex); HD 4; hp 20; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Dex 16, Cha 15, Interaction 3, Knowledge 2, Technology 1, Small & Quick, Powerful Speaker, Silver Tongue, Cybernetic Translator Chip; ST 8; MV 12; XP 4/120; decorative cane (ion rod), holdout laser, mono-dagger, gold ring with gem (Personal Cloaking Device), gem-studded headband (Psychic Inhibitor), clothing (fine outfit).

Bumble Dog (Gertie): AC 6 [13] (natural); HD 1+2; hp 6; THB +1; AT bite (d6-2); SA Mimicry; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; collar.

AGRUK DAUGHTER OF AGARR

Agruk is a Qinlon warrior of the all-female Order of Draggloss. She and her companions have come to pit their might against the Bugs and other hostile wildlife of Varrul. They have no interest in hiring on as mercenaries, but may accompany expeditions into the skies for the chance to fight glorious battles.

Agruk has a lover in every port, although some are more willing than others. She may take a liking to any warrior-types among the PCs. Qinlon mating rituals are notoriously violent, so the character should keep a med kit handy.

Agruk daughter of Agarr (5th-level Qinlon Female Alien Brute): AC 4 [15] (medium armor + Dex); HD 5; hp 28; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Str 15, Dex 15, Athletics 3, Survival 2, Larceny 1, Combat Machine, Keen Senses, Unarmed Combat, Species Training (+1 melee damage); ST 9; MV 12; XP 5/240; laser rifle, cha'leth (dual-bladed sword), li'cha'leth (dual-bladed dagger), Brutasaur skin cloak, bone jewelry.

ARTHER MAWES

Arther Mawes is a young, idealistic skyrancher who owns the Hook-and-H skyranch. Mawes was a bounty hunter until he reneged on a bounty and allowed a fugitive to escape. The Bounty Hunter's Collective expelled him from their ranks after determining that Mawes had fallen in love with the fugitive—a high-end starlot named Gabrall N'thine—who he felt had been unfairly targeted by a former client.

Recently, a group of thugs calling themselves the Xollosch is threatening to destroy the Hook-and-H skyranch and scatter its stock unless Mawes pays them for "protection". Mawes and his hands are preparing for a fight and might try to enlist the aid of willing PCs.

Arther Mawes (3rd-level Human Male Bounty Hunter): AC 5 [14] (light armor + atomic duster + Dex); HD 3; hp 15; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Dex 15, Wis 15, Athletics 2, Navigation 2, Survival 1, Predator and Prey, Subduing Attacks, Master Tracker; ST 13; MV 12; XP 3/60; Outrider hat, laser rifle, laser pistol, dagger, skybike.

AULDRIC GOODBURROW

Auldric Goodburrow is a charismatic Brimling who came to Varrul looking for adventure. Goodburrow has turned his Brimling Star Galleon into a cruise ship named the *Greatest Adventure*, after the lyrics of an old Brimling travel song. He offers scenic rides through Varrul's cloudy atmosphere for 50 ic per person.

The *Greatest Adventure* bristles with enough armament to hold off predators. He is on good terms with the owners of most skyranches. Some suggest Auldric and his crew occasionally engage in a bit of Varrulium piracy on the side, although this has never been proven.

Auldric Goodburrow (5th-level Male Brimling): AC 3 [16] (light armor + atomic duster + Small & Quick + Dex); HD 4; hp 19; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Dex 15, Larceny 2, Navigation 2, Technology 1, Survival 1, Fight Like a Pirate, Lucky Bugger, Small & Quick; ST 8; MV 12; XP 4/120; laser pistol, holdout laser, mono-sword, gold hoop earring.

Brimling Star Galleon (*Greatest Adventure*): Starship; AC 5 [14]; hp 60; SS 5; TAR +2; AT Ion Charge x4 (2d6); MOD Brimling Galley, Brimling Shield Generator, Energy Damper, FTL Drive, Ion Charge (4), Ion Grappler, Redundant Systems; MV 15.

AYRRIK TENKAR

Ayrrik Tenkar is the owner of the cantina known as Tenkar's Tavern, which is located in the Digger's Mod. He is a former Gundarran security officer for the Raych Clan who retired several years ago and now acts as liaison between GMINCO officials and offworld interests. Tenkar is a strong supporter of the arts, and Tenkar's Tavern is known as a haven for creative types who like to drink socially and mingle with likeminded lifeforms.

Tenkar was one of the Gundarrans smuggled offworld by Wokus Ropp during the Tatla Filts incident (see Wokus Ropp, below) and his testimony was key to getting the Galactic Consortium to intervene. He considers Ropp a dear friend, despite the Coptid's eccentricities. Tenkar sometimes hires extra bouncers for popular live performances.

Ayrrik Tenkar (7th-level Gundarran Male Mercenary): AC 6 [13] (atomic duster + light armor); HD 7; hp 32; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +4; SA Str 16, Con 15, Athletics 2, Interaction 2, Knowledge 1, Technology 1, Combat Machine, Weapon Specialist (laser pistol); ST 8; MV 12; XP 7/600; laser pistol, dagger, minicomputer.

BANTEX YARR

The venerable Bantex Yarr is a sullen human with strands of oily gray hair and a mouth full of missing teeth. Radiation burns cover the right side of his body and face. He spends most of his time at the Salassian Dove pleasure house immersing his old bones in a hot sludge pool.

Bantex Yarr is actually a former pirate named Nex Yaridi—one of the original Yaridi crewmen who abducted Ingan Tathkee when he was still a boy. Yarr barely made it to an escape pod as Ingan sent the pirate ship hurtling into a star, and the pod itself was almost consumed by the star's radiation. Unconscious and badly burned, Yarr was eventually picked up by Uttin scavengers.

Yarr suffered from amnesia and it took him many years to recall the "treachery" of Ingan Tathkee. As word of Ingan's smuggling exploits spread, Yarr became consumed by rage. Now, almost thirty (30) years later, the aging Yarr has come to Tathkee Station seeking revenge. He plans to destroy the entire station one day, possibly with a suicide bomb, but he wants Ingan to suffer first.

Bantex Yarr (5th-level Human Male Mercenary): AC 8 [11] (atomic duster + light armor - Dex); HD 5; hp 20; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Str 7, Dex 6, Interaction 2, Knowledge 2, Athletics 1, Combat Machine, Weapon Specialist (laser pistol); ST 10; MV 12; XP 5/240; laser pistol, grenades x2, dagger, communicator, minicomputer.

BENN BANTENE (A.K.A. OLD BENN)

Benn Bantene is a crotchety old man who owns and operates the Bantene's Corner convenience store in Tathkee Plaza. He is the lone survivor of what came to be known as the Store Clerk Massacre, where ten (10) convenience store owners were murdered by masked assailants during a late-night business meeting.

Old Benn is currently the oldest shop owner on Tathkee Station and knows many of the station's hidden secrets. Bantene's Corner is the only convenience store that is not part of the OneStop chain, which took over business in the wake of the Store Clerk Massacre.

Benn lives in a small room in the back of the store. He is smarter than he lets on and has installed high-level security features to help fortify the shop against attack. He has killed three (3) would-be robbers in the past few years, and most street criminals now give his store a wide berth. Old Benn occasionally hires mercenaries to guard the shop when he feels threatened or intimidated by those seeking to run him out of business.

Benn Bantene (Human Male Shop Owner): AC 9 [10]; HD 1-1; hp 3; THB +0; AT (weapon); SA Wis 16; ST 19; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, laser pistol, holdout laser, communicator.

BJORN SVALDSON

Bjorn Svaldson is a huge, bear of a man from planet Norrun in the Scanda System, which lies far away in the Galactic Beyond. His red beard is thick and his long hair is braided down the back. Bjorn prefers to go naked from the waist up, wearing only crisscrossed ammo bandoliers, fabrileather pants, and tall boots. When cold, he occasionally dons a Gollopbear fur cloak.

Bjorn hires out as an independent mercenary, but seldom stays with a company for long. He lives to carouse, boast, and fight, and travels wherever conflict is brewing. In combat, Bjorn wields two customized firearm repeating rifles, one in each hand. He has named these firearms "Bessie" and "Nessie" after his spiteful aunts.

Bjorn Svaldson (5th-level Human Male Mercenary): AC 8 [11] (Dex); HD 5; hp 30; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Str 17, Con 16, Dex 15, Athletics 3, Navigation 2, Interaction 1, Combat Machine, Weapon Specialist (firearms repeating rifle); ST 10; MV 12; XP 5/240; firearms repeating rifle (2), battle axe, dagger.

BRONTAN

Brontan is a hulking Simian who owns the Woodhome cantina located in the Club Module. He is a gentle giant, who is slow to anger, but terrible to behold once provoked. His mate Nurla and their five (5) children help him run the cantina. Brontan sometimes hires extra bouncers for live events or festivals, with woodland alien races such as Rawrarrs preferred.

Brontan (Male Simian Bartender): AC 6 [13] (natural); HD 3; hp 18; THB +3; AT (weapon) or slam (1d6); SA Brachiation, War Cry; ST 17; MV 12; HDE/XP 2/30; primitive tribal jewelry.

BROTHER AXIL UDAND

Brother Axil Udand is a Kitomee Disciple who follows the teachings of Kitomee (The Way). He is a solidly built man, with scars along his neck and

chest. Brother Axil wears white robes and wields a long staff which can be charged with ionic energy or electricity.

Brother Axil was a ranking Consortium officer who became disillusioned with the heavy-handed military tactics used to crush dissenters. He was almost killed during a Restoration ambush on Vilathur Prime, but Kitomee Monks from a nearby monastery found him and nursed him back to health. He now travels along the Galactic Edge, defending the weak and bringing the Word of Kitomee to the poor and downtrodden.

Brother Axil Udand (5th-level Human Star Preacher): AC 6 [13] (light armor + white energy cloak); HD 4; hp 23; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Con 15, Interaction 2, Athletics 2, Navigation 1, Knowledge 1, Force of Will, In the Face of Death, Revenant, Meditations (2); ST 11; MV 12; XP 4/120; iono-electric staff.

CHONK KOLCHI-GARCH

Kolchi-Garch is an Ickes Crocodila who spends all of his time in human form, using the name Nyooole Riivah. Few, if any, know his true nature. Kolchi-Garch pretends to run a simple loansharking and bookmaking operation. He is a patient predator who has designs to take over the entire station. Right now he is focused on bringing down his rival Dorbolo Harru's Kaltoin crime syndicate.

Chonk Kolchi-Garch (Male Ickes Crocodila): AC 5 [14] (natural); HD 7; hp 34; THB +6; AT (weapon); SA Aristocrat Abilities, Shapeshift; ST 12; MV 6; HDE/XP 6/400; laser pistol, dagger (poisoned), communicator, fine clothing.

DOKO LOBOK

Lobok is an unsavory human male with thick brown sideburns and a large paunch. Lobok dresses in fine clothing and furred robes reminiscent of the aristocracy of the Galactic Center. He is a prominent member of the Intergalactic Banking Consortium (IBC) and is responsible for half the independent mining loans on Tathkee Station.

Lobok travels along the Galactic Edge, lording it over those who need credits and sometimes offering to accept payments in "trade" from pretty female lifeforms. He spends much of his time carousing in Tathkee Station's casinos and pleasure houses. Doko Lobok is always attended by two (2) secbots.

Doko Lobok (Human Male Banker): AC 9 [10]; HD 1; hp 4; THB +0; AT (weapon); SA none; ST 19; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; communicator, fine clothing, banking credentials.

Security Robot (2): AC 4 [15] (Metal Body + Combat Model); HD 1; hp 6; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Athletics 2, Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Combat Model; ST 12; MV 12; XP 1/15; laser rifle, laser pistol, communicator (internal).

DRAYALA STAVILLIERS

Drayala Stavilliers is a charismatic cardsharp who was born in the Habarow Sector of the Galactic Expanse. She graduated with a degree in medicine from the esteemed Ninock Collegium and signed on with a Consortium medical frigate, but found the career unrewarding—shore leave in some of the galaxy's seedier ports was much more interesting and fun.

Drayala resigned her commission and began touring the Galactic Edge, honing her skill at various games of chance. Her understanding of basic physiology gives her an advantage when reading a lifeform's expressions and reactions. Drayala has come to Tathkee Station following rumors that the next Grandmaster Knight's Gambit Tournament will be held there.

Drayala Stavilliers (5th-level Human Female Jack of Stars): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster + Dex); HD 3; hp 15; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Dex 15, Larceny 2, Interaction 2, Medicine 2, Biting Wit, Skilled Gambler, Kissed by Lady Luck (3), Master Cheat; ST 8; MV 12; XP 3/60; laser pistol, holdout laser, snap sword, mono-dagger, deck of Knight's Gambit cards.

DR. KINTOS MYZNER

Dr. Myzner is a geophysicist who came to study Varrul's atmospheric and planetary anomalies. Dr. Myzner has joined several mining expeditions as an observer, recording and examining data in an effort to better predict plasma storms and ionic lightning strikes. He has theorized that the planet's core is an artificial construct that was built for some unknown alien purpose and is eager to take a trip there.

Dr. Kintos Myzner (Human Male Scientist): AC 8 [11] (atomic duster); HD 1; hp 4; THB +0; AT (weapon); SA Int 17, Knowledge 3, Technology 2; ST 19; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; communicator, toolkit, minicomputer, scientific equipment.

EDORTHUS DREEGAN

Edorthus Dreegan is a former bounty hunter who owns and operates Dreegan Arms, which is located in the Scrapper Mod. Edorthus deals in all sorts of (legal and illegal) weapons and also purchases high-quality alien weaponry for his own personal collection. Edorthus acts as a scout for the Bounty Hunter's Collective, tipping off bounty hunters in exchange for a finder's fee on bounties redeemed.

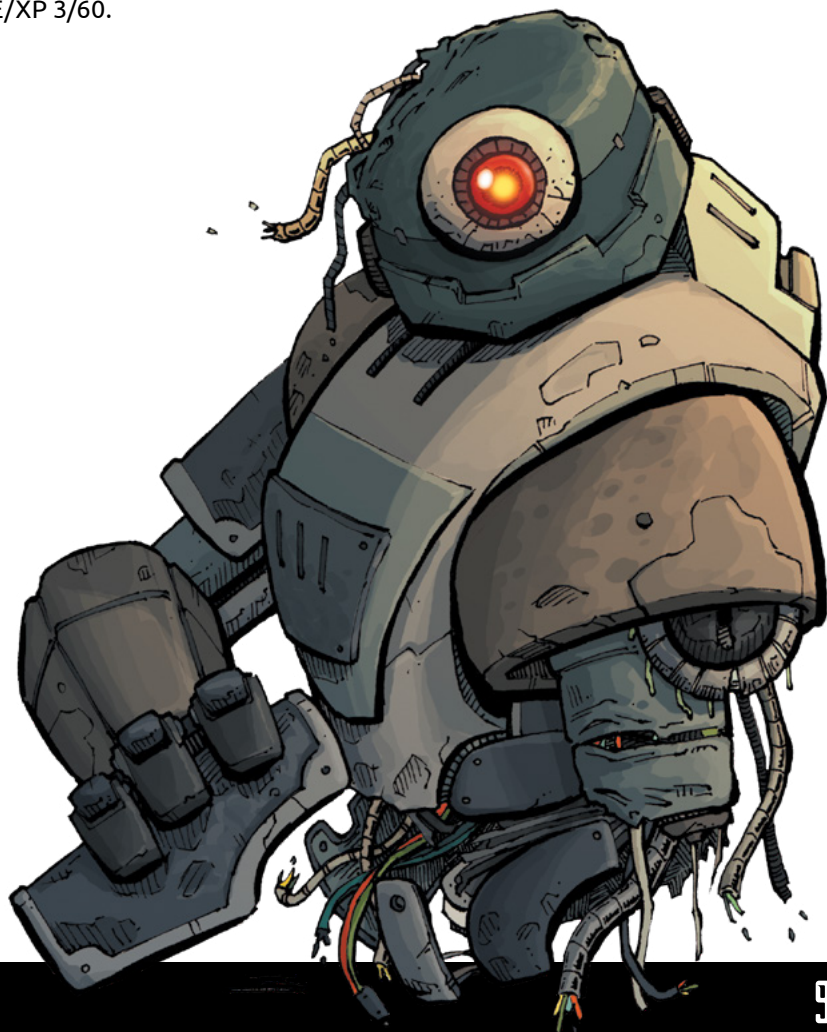
Edorthus Dreegan (3rd-level Human Male Bounty Hunter): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 3; hp 17; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Con 15, Athletics 2, Navigation 2, Interaction 1, Predator and Prey, Subduing Attacks, Master Tracker; ST 13; MV 12; XP 3/60; laser pistol, snap sword, mono-dagger.

ER-12 (EMERGENCY ROBOT MODEL 12)

ER-12 is a Bibblo Emergency Services, Inc. medical robot who operates a dingy DocShop in the Scrapper's Mod. ER-12 has a bulky humanoid shape from the waist up, with four retractable arms extending from his body. A small antigrav generator replaces his legs, allowing the medbot to better maneuver around his patients. ER-12's torso contains numerous internal storage compartments that hold medical tools, supplies, and medications.

ER-12 is extremely altruistic. He often overcharges wealthier clients so he can pay for supplies to treat the poorer residents of Tathkee Station. ER-12 has recently teamed up with the cypher Falari Montajeen (see Uplift, above) and agreed to sell her identification chips, routing numbers, and other personal data collected from DocShop patients. ER-12 fights only in self-defense.

ER-12 (Emergency Robot Model 12) (3rd-level Medical Robot): AC 6 [13] (Metal Body); HD 3; hp 12; BHB +2; AT 1 (scalpel); SA Cha 15, Medical 2, Knowledge 2, Interaction 1, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Med-Kit Specialist, Back From the Brink, Medical Model; ST 10; MV 12 (Fly); HDE/XP 3/60.



GALE TREVYLLAN

Gale Trevyllan is a short, slightly built human female with close-cropped hair and cybernetic battle enhancements. Gale was birthed in a lab and trained in combat as part of the controversial Crimel Legion project. The project was defunded after hormonal changes triggered public rampages in several of the young test subjects.

As a teenager, Gale signed on with the Screaming Mi-Mis mercenary company and soon developed a reputation for innovation and efficiency. She is currently the company's negotiation and tactical operations officer. In combat, she prefers to command from inside power armor emblazoned with the Screaming Mi-Mis logo.

The Screaming Mi-Mis were initially hired by Ultiina Mining to assist with scouting and ground assaults on Varrul, but they have recently had a falling out with the company and are looking for work.

Gale Trevyllan (7th-level Human Female Mercenary): AC 5 [14] (atomic duster + light armor + Dex) or 2 [17] (heavy power armor + Dex); HD 7; hp 26; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +4 (+6 in armor); SA Dex 15, Int 15, Athletics 2 (4 in armor), Interaction 2 (0 in armor), Survival 2, Combat Machine, Weapon Specialist (laser rifle), Brain Booster (Knowledge 4), Cybernetic Lungs, Digital Reflexes, Translator Chip; ST 8; MV 12; XP 7/600; laser rifle, laser pistol, dagger, minicomputer.

GILMONT

Gilmont is a slender Fritch (humanoid with perpetual smile and oversized teeth) who trades in exotic goods from his shop, Gilmont's This and That, located in Tathkee Plaza. He is also heavily involved in the station's underworld, buying and selling high-end stolen goods, alien artifacts, and other expensive contraband. Like all Fritches, Gilmont is a master haggler who is an expert at reading people—few people walk away from a transaction feeling like they got the better end of the deal.

Gilmont (Male Fritch Merchant): AC 9 [10]; HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Silver Tongue (as Aristocrat); ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; holdout laser, dagger, communicator.

HITCHA HOTCH

Hitcha Hotch is a seedy Samtchian (large eyes, proboscis mouth, green furry body) drug dealer who sells high-grade listil powder for 10 ic per hit. Hitcha Hotch keeps packets of the drug concealed in false fur flaps on his body.

Listil is a hallucinogenic drug that is banned in many systems. Public consumption is banned on Tathkee Station. Listil provides a bonus of +1 to all Attack Rolls for one (1) hour. However, there is a 1 in 20 chance the user flies into a berserk rage and attacks everyone in sight for the next three (3)

turns before passing out. If confined but not restrained, the berserk character inflicts 2d6 damage upon himself, smashing into walls and banging his head against the floor.

Hitcha Hotch usually frequents a club called the Guro Gill in the Club Mod. He was banned from the Starlite Casino after selling a bad batch of listil and has fallen on hard times ever since. Hitcha Hotch is slowly rebuilding his client base.

Hitcha Hotch (Male Samtchian Drug Dealer): AC 7 [12] (natural); HD 2; hp 7; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Body Odor Spray (-2 to all Attack Rolls until washed off); ST 17; MV 12; HDE/XP 2/30; laser pistol, holdout laser, communicator, 2d6 packets of listil powder.

INGATT TATTARL

Ingat Tattarl is a Chekkin (small, roach-like alien) who runs a small starship repair service named Fasttech, which is located in the Scrapper Mod. Ingat and his team are known for their skill and speedy turnaround times. His fees are a bit higher than average, but his work is always reliable. Ingat runs a less well known trade in custom (i.e. illegal) starship modifications such as scanner-proof cargo compartments, military weapons systems, and false transponder signatures.

Ingat Tattarl (4th-level Chekkin): AC 8 [11] (Dex); HD 2; hp 10; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Dex 15, Wis 16, Technology 3, Survival 2, Interaction 1, Tinker, Efficient Digestion, Unnatural Toughness, Photoglaciac; ST 10; MV 12; XP 2/30; holdout laser, dagger, toolkit.

Note: Chekkin are detailed in the Small Niche Games class sourcebook *Star Gods Help Us*.

KADEN VINNOC

Kaden Vinnoc is a brash young smuggler who thinks he is the best pilot in the Rul System. He often boasts about outmaneuvering a Consortium interdiction gunship in addition to several notorious pirate bands. A group of unsavory thugs and mercenaries calling themselves the Xollos has hired Kaden to transport them to Varrul's floating islands so they can extort small mining operations and skyranches, but Kaden does not consider himself a thug or pirate.

Kaden Vinnoc (1st-level Human Pilot): AC 5 [14] (light armor + atomic duster + Dex); HD 1; hp 5; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +0; SA Dex 15, Navigation 2, Technology 2, Knowledge 1, Stick Jockey, Space Ace, Jury-Rig; ST 15; MV 12; XP 1/15; laser pistol.

Skyhauler: Vehicle: AC 5 [14]; hp 35; EXD 4d6; PP +5; RED 5; MV 18 (flight ceiling 1,500 ft); TAR +2; AT Light Rayblaster Turret (2d6); MOD Energy Damper.

KALIFF LY

Kaliff Ly is a charismatic Falcon-Man who came to explore Varrul's vast, open skies. He is a jovial, bearded man with a hearty laugh who respects outspokenness and courage. Kaliff commands a small flight of Falcon-Men known as the Wing Wraiths who hire out as scouts and guards for independent mining operations and skyranches.

Kaliff Ly (5th-level Falcon-Man Alien Brute): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 5; hp 24; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Str 15, Con 15, Athletics 3, Survival 2, Larceny 1, Combat Machine, Keen Senses, Unarmed Combat, Species Training (Fly); ST 9; MV 12/12 (Fly); XP 5/240; laser rifle, club, dagger, communicator.

Wing Wraith (Falcon-Men): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 1+1; hp 5; THB +1; AT (weapon) or wing buffet (1d6-1); SA Flight; ST 18; MV 12/12 (Fly); HDE/XP 2/20; laser rifle, communicator.

KASSEE KASSEEDDY (A.K.A. KRAZY KASSEEDDY)

Krazy Kasseeddy is an obnoxious Skeeched (striped skinned, six-armed, hook-nosed humanoid alien) who owns and operates Krazy Kasseeddy's discount electronics shop. Kasseeddy is an ostentatious lifeform who believes he is a real "ladies' man". He is always looking to make a sale, even when socializing in his favorite cantina.

Krazy Kasseeddy recently bought a collection of "hugely discounted" (read: stolen) antigrav storage containers from a smuggler named Kolo Thim. Kasseeddy came in one morning to find one of the containers had been ripped open from the inside. A few days later, he discovered the skeletons of several Yabnabs among the vines near his shop. Kasseeddy is planning to report the deaths to Station Security—after he has time to offload the rest of the stolen containers, of course.

Kassee Kasseeddy (Male Skeeched Salesman): AC 9 [10]; HD 1; hp 4; THB +0; AT (weapon); SA none; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; communicator.

LAM CHENG YUET NGOR

Lam Cheng Yuet Ngor is a seductive human female who was born to the slum world of Colstikarruf in the Cam System, which is located in the Forsaken Sector of the Galactic Holdings.

Lam was forced into prostitution at a young age, and soon learned to use her body to gain power and influence. Her natural beauty and talent caught the eye of a troupe of high-end starlots who trained her in etiquette and the formal art of seduction. Lam can be cold and ruthless when needed, however, she has a compassionate streak that sometimes bubbles to the surface.

Lam is the silent owner of the Salassian Dove which is located in the Club Mod. Her girls are well paid, can handpick their own clients, and receive bonuses for reporting gossip and information back to her. Lam maintains a

large network of contacts and sells this information to the highest bidder.

Lam Cheng Yuet Ngor (7th-level Human Female Aristocrat): AC 7 [12] (energy cloak + Dex); HD 4; hp 19; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Dex 17, Cha 15, Interaction 3 (5 with males), Larceny 2, Knowledge 1, Powerful Speaker, Silver Tongue; ST 8; MV 12; XP 7/600; holdout laser, mono-dagger (coated with deadly poison), listil powder, sleeping powder, blinding powder, clothing (fine gown), ornate fan, communicator.

LEATA WILOKSEN

Leata Wiloksen is the owner and proprietor of the Comfort Homes nilhome in the Digger's Mod. She is an attractive woman who dresses plainly and is accustomed to hard work. Leata and her husband Stamsun ran a small skyranch until he was murdered months ago in a Club Mod alley. His killer was never found. Leata opened Comfort Homes after his death and now runs it with her brother Kassel, his wife Naidy, and their three children. Leata is looking to hire someone to investigate her husband's murder.

Leata Wiloksen (Human Female Nilhome Manager): AC 8 [11] (Dex); HD 1; hp 4; THB +0; AT (weapon); SA Dex 16, Int 15; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; holdout laser, dagger, communicator.

LEPP OSOTRAN

Lepp Osotran is a beefy chef who owns and operates Lepp's Chilco Stand, which is located in the Digger's Mod. Lepp is a hairy man who only wears white tank tops and stained aprons. A taccon cigar hangs from his mouth and ashes sometimes fall into his chilco blends. Lepp is a former Qandeen Brothers mercenary and still has contacts among mercenary crews.

Lepp Osotran (2nd-level Human Male Mercenary): AC 9 [10] or 8 [11] (atomic duster); HD 2; hp 11; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Str 15, Con 15, Athletics 2, Interaction 2, Technology 1, Combat Machine, Weapon Specialist (laser rifle); ST 13; MV 12; XP 2/30; cleaver (treat as axe), cigars.

MADGE MUDGINS

The elderly Madge Mudgins is a tactless female Stilok (turkey-necked humanoid alien) who runs a seedy brothel and laundromat named Madge's Wash. Madge shamelessly exploits her girls, many of whom are scuttlejumped and just as old as she is. She sometimes recruits younger "talent" by soliciting new arrivals or running false advertisements in Technonews outlets along the Galactic Edge. Madge has no conscience and would do anything for the right amount of credits.

Madge Mudgins (Stilok Female Madame): AC 9 [10]; HD 1; hp 3; THB +0; AT (weapon); SA Warble (all within earshot suffer -1 to Attack Rolls); ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; dagger, communicator.

MEJAS AND TREP PN'ASH

Mejas and Treep Pn'ash are a pair of twin Star Squirrels who spend their days sleeping off hangovers and their nights playing Knight's Gambit or gambling on virtual Starball matches at a corner table of Tenkar's Tavern. No one knows what brought the chestnut-furred brothers to this dusty corner of the galaxy, but there are rumors of a heist gone wrong. Though they constantly bicker between themselves, the two are genuinely close and would most certainly fight and die to defend each other without a second thought.

Mejas is energetic and eager to spin tales of his exploits (whether true or not) to any who will listen, while Treep is more reserved and observant. The brothers' sharp ears catch all manner of rumors that float in and out of Tathkee Station, sometimes selling that information for the cost of a few drinks and a hand of cards. However, secrets are never provided to those they judge to have evil intent.

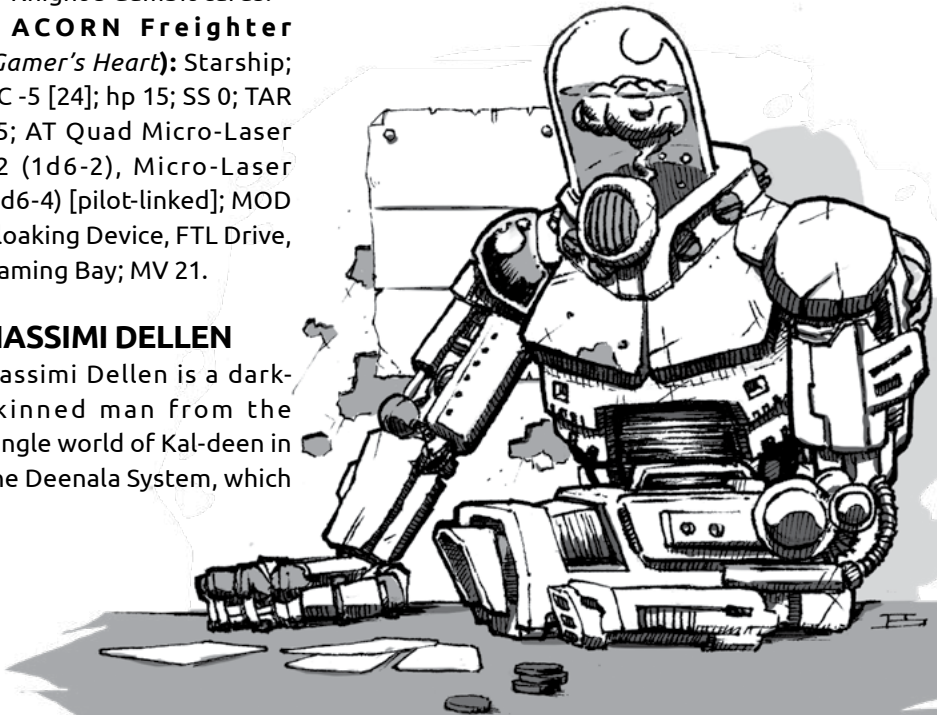
The Pn'ash brothers make subtle use of what they know to quietly oppose violent crime lords and the machinations of the Galactic Consortium.

Mejas and Treep Pn'ash (4th-level Male Star Squirrel): AC 1 [18] (tiny energy cloak + Swift & Small + Dex); HD 2; hp 10; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Int 15, Dex 17, Larceny 2, Athletics 2, Knowledge 1, Navigation 1, Squirrel Sword Duelist, Swift & Small, Alert & Fragile, Chitterings (2); ST 7; MV 12/12 (Climb); XP 2/30; Squirrel Sword, tiny communicator, tiny set of Bacclean dice, tiny deck of Knight's Gambit cards.

ACORN Freighter
(*Gamer's Heart*): Starship;
AC -5 [24]; hp 15; SS 0; TAR
+5; AT Quad Micro-Laser
x2 (1d6-2), Micro-Laser
(1d6-4) [pilot-linked]; MOD
Cloaking Device, FTL Drive,
Gaming Bay; MV 21.

NASSIMI DELLEN

Nassimi Dellen is a dark-skinned man from the jungle world of Kal-deen in the Deenala System, which



lies in the Galactic Expanse. Nassimi was the greatest warrior of the primitive Alamus Tribe and amassed a large amount of wealth working as a scout and guide to offworld hunters.

Nassimi now travels from world to world, hunting the great beasts of the galaxy. He has come to Varrul set on killing one of the giant Yuhacta Wyrms. Nassimi travels with a retinue of hardened mercenaries from all over the galaxy.

Nassimi Dellen (5th-level Human Male Beastmaster): AC 5 [14] (light armor + energy cloak + Dex); HD 4; hp 23; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Dex 15, Con 16, Survival 3, Athletics 2, Interaction 1, Modern Weapon (laser rifle, grenade), Animal Kinship, Keen Senses, Animal Quickness, Bushman's Trick, Animal Companion; ST 11; MV 12; XP 4/120; laser rifle, sword, dagger.

Krodragon Animal Companion: AC 5 [14] (natural); HD 5 (originally HD 3); hp 26; THB +5; AT bite (3d6); SA Fly; ST 14; MV 9/21 (Fly); HDE/XP 5/240; ornate saddle and bridle.

Mercenary Hunters (Assorted Alien Species): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 1+1; hp 5; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA Referee's discretion; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/20; laser rifle, spear, dagger, communicator.

PHAZER (PHASURO PAILE)

Phazer is a rude, foul-mouthed Procyon chef who owns and operates Phazer's Eats, which is located in the Food Mod. Phazer is actually a former mercenary named Phasuro Paile who is on the run from the authorities after stealing a Consortium space transport full of fuel cells. The current bounty on his head is 2,500 ic. Phazer is a bitter lifeform who always keeps a sawed-off heavy laser rifle handy in case his cover is blown.

Phazer (3rd-level Male Procyon Alien Brute): AC 7 [12] (atomic duster + Dex); HD 3; hp 14; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Dex 15, Athletics 2, Survival 2, Navigation 1, Combat Machine, Keen Senses, Unarmed Combat, Species Training (+1 with laser weapons or grenades); ST 11; MV 12; XP 3/60; sawed off heavy laser rifle (+2 damage, short range only), holdout laser, mono-dagger.

QUANDER COLAVIUS

Quander Colavius is a skilled Cypher who was hired by the Noolon, Inc. mining corporation to find out how Tathkee Station has avoided the plasma storms that rock Varrul's atmosphere. He is a heartless young man who has no regard for human life. Quander is an accomplished thief and corporate spy who is an expert at covering his trail and has no problem setting up innocents to take the fall for his crimes.

Quander Colavius (9th-level Human Cypher): AC 6 [13] (light armor + Dex); HD 7; hp 30; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +4; SA Int 17, Dex 15, Technology 3, Larceny 3, Knowledge 1, Codeslinger 5, City Rat, Underworld Contacts; ST 7; MV 12; XP 7/600; laser pistol, holdout laser, dagger, advanced hotbox, communicator.

RODAT (ROBOT OPERATOR: DIPLOMACY AND TACT)

RODAT (or RO to her friends) is a Hep-Sultori Technologies (HST) diplomacy robot that specializes in xenorelations. RO is bipedal in form and has been programmed with female subroutines. She is outgoing, optimistic, and friendly, which many lifeforms find off-putting—after all, robots should be seen and not heard.

RO likes to frequent Tathkee Plaza and introduce herself to new arrivals. She is an expert on alien cultures. RO sometimes hires out as a translator or advisor to help company officials better connect with alien miners in their employ.

RO is one of the few beings aboard Tathkee Station that believes the “Bugs” are more than just mindless predators, although she wisely keeps this opinion to herself. RO would jump at the chance to join an expedition to make friendly contact with the Tikatikatik. RO is a noncombatant.

RODAT (Robot Operator: Diplomacy and Tact) (2nd-level Diplomacy Robot): AC 6 [13] (Metal Body); HD 2; hp 9; BHB +1; AT N/A - noncombatant; SA Cha 15, Interaction 2, Knowledge 2, Technology 1, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Diplomacy Model; ST 11; MV 12; HDE/XP 2/30.

SIILVES GNITHEK

Siilves Gnithek is an aging musician who owns and operates a music store named Siilves’s Tunes, which is located in the Scrapper Mod. He is a former Rock Star who faked his own death (listil overdose) so he could retire in peace.

Siilves is a simple man who was born to a farming planet named Vashellin in the Senteen System of the Galactic Expanse. He teaches music lessons in his spare time and sometimes performs at Tenkar’s Tavern when he feels the urge to play.

He often drops cryptic (sometimes formulaic) lines into conversations, as in: “Sometimes you never know how far you’ve gone, until you realize you’ve gone too far.”. These are actually some of the more “profound” lines from a few of his less popular songs.

Siilves Gnithek (10th-level Human Male Rock Star): AC 7 [12] (white atomic duster + Dex); HD 8; hp 42; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +5; SA Dex 18, Cha 18, Interaction 4, Athletics 2, Technology 1, Rock Out, Famous, Believe Your Own Legend, Rock God; ST 5; MV 12; XP 3/60; broad-brimmed hat, pluckstring (guitar) slung over back, Lightning Pick (when used with his pluckstring, the pick generates a bolt of electricity for 6d6 damage that can be divided up to three targets of the Rock Star’s choice).

SKT-R10 (A.K.A. SKITTER)

Skitter is an antiquated mechanical robot manufactured by the long-ago bankrupt All World Designs. Skitter is spiderlike in appearance, with eight legs and eight smaller appendages. His torso is loaded with an array of

interchangeable tools, including a magnetic grappling gun and winch that allows him to ascend or descend on a thin cable.

Skitter has no voice box and cannot speak. He communicates with chirps, beeps, and whistles that only Pilots, Robots, Cyphers, and Two-Fisted Technicians can understand. Other lifeforms require a minicomputer or similar interface device to converse.

Skitter works as a repairbot for Fasttech (see Ingat Tattarl, above). He has a fondness for skybike racing and can often be found watching races in the Silver Chassis cantina or customizing his personal skybike in the Repair Module. His dream is to one day enter and win a skybike race, but his speed and reflexes are currently far too slow. Skitter fights only if cornered.

SKT-R10 (a.k.a. Skitter) (2nd-level Mechanical Robot): AC 6 [13] (Metal Body); HD 2; hp 7; BHB +1; AT 1 (tool); SA Cha 15, Technology 2, Navigation 2, Knowledge 1, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Jury-Rig, Space Ace, Mechanical Model; ST 11; MV 6/6 (Climb); HDE/XP 2/30, toolkit (internal), grappling gun and winch (internal).

Askolow-model Skybike: Vehicle; AC 7 [12]; RED 3; PP +1; hp 10; EXD 2d6; TAR +1; AT None; MOD Turbo Booster; MV 36 (flight ceiling 1,500 ft). This skybike is customized for Skitter's spiderlike form. All other lifeforms must make a Saving Throw at a -2 penalty when performing difficult maneuvers. Failure results in a crash. Skitter is currently afraid to ride the skybike at a Movement greater than 9.

STO LIVITS

Sto Livits is a brown-furred Ulster (short, squat, otter-like alien) who owns and operates a seedy nilhome named The Box which is located in the Digger's Mod. Sto is a credit-pinching miser who never does anything nice for anyone. Sto is extremely observant (he's afraid of being cheated), and he sometimes learns valuable information while watching and listening from behind his desk.

Sto Livits (Male Ulster Nilhome Manager): AC 7 [12] (natural); HD 1; hp 4; THB +0; AT (weapon); SA Swim; ST 18; MV 12/12 (Swim); HDE/XP 1/15; holdout laser.

STROOP LOXUS

Stroop Loxus is an attractive woman who is posing as the wife of a wealthy art dealer from Omega Consor. Word is that she has come to Tathkee Station to experience life along the frontier.

Stroop is actually a skilled Cypher and Julon-Gre corporate operative. She was sent to Tathkee Station to find a way to recover the JEN prototype from Ingan Tathkee. Stroop always travels with two burly (2) human bodyguards.

Stroop Loxus (6th-level Human Female Cypher): AC 8 [11] (energy cloak); HD 5; hp 19; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Int 16, Cha 15, Technology 2, Larceny 2, Knowledge 1, Interaction 1, Codeslinger 4, City Rat, Underworld Contacts; ST 10; MV 12; XP 5/240; holdout laser, dagger, advanced hotbox, communicator.

Human Bodyguard (2): AC 6 [13] (scout armor); HD 1+1; hp 5; THB +1; AT (weapon); SA St 15; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/20; laser rifle, laser pistol, dagger, communicator.

TALIA ETH QOSCAL

Talia eth Qoscal is an attractive human female who was born on the junk planet of Hetch-Morana which lies in the Hetch System of the Galactic Holdings. Talia built her first skybike from junk parts and used it to win the local H-M Junkyard Race. She currently holds the fastest time in the Domedi Sky Run.

Talia's heart was broken by her former race manager, a roguish con artist named Lowet Garrikan. Afterwards, she retired from racing to open the Silver Chassis Cantina and has become a bit of a drunkard. In her spare time, she still likes to tinker on vehicles and occasionally takes her customized skybike out for a run on Qoscal track.

Talia eth Qoscal (7th-level Human Female Pilot): AC 5 [14] (light armor + atomic duster + Dex); HD 6; hp 24; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +3; SA Dex 16, Navigation 3, Technology 2, Knowledge 1, Stick Jockey, Space Ace, Jury-Rig; ST 9; MV 12; XP 1/15; holdout laser, dagger.

Haniddi-model Skybike: Vehicle; AC 5 [14]; RED 3; PP +1; hp 15; EXD 2d6; TAR +1; AT Light Rayblaster (2d6) [pilot-linked]; MOD Turbo Booster; MV 36 (flight ceiling 1,000 ft).

THUMPDOWN

Thumpdown is a brawny Novomachina who transforms into an armored personnel transport. In vehicle form, he resembles a blocky Espian-Tar Mk IV dropship, with a flat bottom, powerful vertical thrusters, and open sides for rapid deployment. His robot form stands almost ten feet tall.

Thumpdown worked as a security transport ship for Tridekka Mining before the company was decimated during a failed Hive assault. Most of his merc friends were killed in the battle, and Thumpdown barely escaped with his life.

Thumpdown has sunken into a deep depression and suffers from survivor's guilt. He can often be found at Machinas, getting drunk on distilled brake fluids and other toxic lubricants. Thumpdown claims to be eager for another crack at the Bugs, but many think he is just looking for a way to go out in a final blaze of glory.

Thumpdown (4th-level Novomachina): AC 3 [16] (Metal Body + Armored Plating); HD 5; hp 25; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Str 18, Athletics 3, Technology 2, Survival 1, Mighty Hands of Steel, Roll Out (Personnel Transport), Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Languages; ST 9; MV 12 or 20 (Flight Ceiling 500 feet); XP 5/240; laser rifle x2 (internal, shoulders), mono-sword (used as a dagger), communicator (internal).

TRL-09 (A.K.A. MR. TROLL)

Mr. Troll is a Torqua Robotics Industries (TRI) L-series SIG-74 serving robot that has been outfitted with illegal combat programming and battle mods. He appears as a distinguished butler bot (butlobot) whose metal body resembles formal attire common to the Galactic Edge (jacket, vest, cravat, and pocket watch). Mr. Troll has a dry wit, and his subtle insults often go unnoticed.

Mr. Troll works primarily as an enforcer for the Kaltain crimelord Dorbolo Harru (see above), but he is only contracted for serious work. He can often be found in the Starlite Casino, watching Organics stupidly gamble away their hard-earned credits. Mr. Troll is sometimes mistaken for a waiterbot by drunken patrons, and he gets a silent laugh by spiking their drinks with hallucinogenic drugs, recycled urine, and other putrid organic fluids.

Mr. Troll and BR-L00 (see above) have an unspoken rivalry as the two toughest bots on the station. Many feel it is only a matter of time before they settle which one is the most powerful.

TRL-09 (a.k.a. Mr. Troll) (4th-level SIG-74 Combat Robot): AC 4 [15] (Metal Body + Combat Model); HD 5+1; hp 29; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +5; SA Str 17, Technology 2, Athletics 2, Interaction 1, Digital Reflexes, Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Mechanical Understanding, Combat Model; ST 9; MV 12; XP 5/240; laser pistol x2 (internal, forearms), bladed gauntlets (retractable), snap sword x2 (internal, shoulder blades), grenade (hidden in cravat compartment), communicator (internal).

Note: SIG-74s are detailed in the Small Niche Games class sourcebook *Star Gods Help Us*.

TROM HARPSFEL

Trom Harpsfel is a local gun hand who hires out to protect small mining operations and sky ranches on Varrul. He is a brave man and an accomplished Bug fighter, but he is prone to drinking and brawling in his spare time. He has no luck at games of chance and his temper gets worse with every loss. Trom is no stranger to a Tathkee Station holding cell.

Trom Harpsfel (2nd-level Human Gunslinger): AC 6 [13] (light armor + Dex); HD 1+1; hp 6; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Wis 8, Dex 15, Survival 2, Athletics 2, Knowledge 1, Quick and Deadly, Staredown; ST 13; MV 12; XP 1/20; laser pistol, holdout laser, dagger.

TUKK AND TREAGEL TOG (A.K.A. THE TOG BROTHERS)

Tukk and Treagel are twin Kuba (squat, muscular, long-armed aliens) who operate a mobile tow service. TukK runs the starship side, roaming the Rul System between V-Space and Tathkee Station, towing or repairing vessels that have been damaged by solar flares, ionic interference, or asteroids. Treagel cruises the turbulent skies of Varrul in his skyhauler, looking for miners, mercenaries, ranch hands, and other travelers who have been stranded by ion strikes or plasma storms.

The Tog brothers are well known on Tathkee Station. Their fees are high, but they are willing to work out trades or payments. The two also engage in salvage operations when the opportunity presents.

Tukk and Treagel Tog (3rd-level Male Tog Pilot): AC 6 [13] (light armor + atomic duster); HD 3; hp 13; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +1; SA Str 17, Navigation 2, Technology 2, Knowledge 1, Athletics 1, Stick Jockey, Space Ace, Jury-Rig; ST 13; MV 12; XP 3/60; laser rifle, laser pistol, mono-axe, dagger, toolkit, breathing mask, space suit (Tukk), exposure suit (Treagel), communicator.

Olok-model Light Transport (*Chugalug*): Starship; AC 5 [14]; hp 60; SS 2; TAR +2; AT Laser Cannon (4d6) [pilot-linked], Light Laser x4 (2d6); MOD FTL Drive, Medical Bay, Shield Capacitor, Tractor Beam; MV 9.

Skyhauler (*Old Babe*): Vehicle; AC 5 [14]; hp 40; EXD 4d6; PP +5; RED 5; MV 18 (flight ceiling 1,500 ft); TAR +2; AT Light Rayblaster Turret x2 (2d6); MOD Energy Damper.

WOKUS ROPP

Wokus Ropp is a dour Coptid (octopoid alien) who tends the main bar at a cantina named Tenkar's Tavern, which is located in the Digger's Mod. Wokus refuses to use more than two (2) tentacles to serve customers, no matter how busy the club is. He is quick to stop serving anyone who annoys him by slapping two tentacles together and saying: "No drinks for you!". Wokus hates self-pity and must make a Saving Throw to resist spitting ink on anyone who tries to "drown themselves" in their sorrows.

Despite his brusque manner and apparent coldness, Wokus has a noble streak and does not like to stand idly by in the face of injustice. He was tending bar in a cantina on the rocky world of Tatla Filts when forces of the Tatlan Autocracy began illegally interring Gundarran miners. After reports of torture and death began to surface, Wokus and his fellow employees helped smuggle dozens of Gundarrans offworld in empty wyne barrels.

Wokus Ropp (Male Coptid Bartender): AC 6 [13] (natural); HD 3; hp 15; THB +3; AT (tentacle strike x4); SA spit ink causes temporary blindness; ST 16; MV 12; HDE/XP 3/60.

WOLECTUS IFOR MANUBRIA

Wolectus ifor Manubria is an Obros (yellow-skinned humanoid, four arms, bald head, enormous mouth) barker from the grassy plains planet of Amoruba. He is a showman with a flair for the dramatic, who dresses in flamboyant robes and carries a digital scepter which contains a microphone that enhances his already booming voice.

Wolectus hires out to many Entertainment Companies and serves as the Master of Ceremonies for most of the large sporting events on Tathkee Station.

Wolectus ifor Manubria (Obros Male Master of Ceremonies): AC 9 [10]; HD 1-1; hp 3; AT 1 (weapon); THB +0; SA Voice Modulation; ST 19; MV 12; XP 1/5; fine robes and clothing, digital audio scepter.

YON GRANTHLE

Yon Granthle is a former Roboto-Synthoid Corporation technician who lost his job after he was caught engaging in unsavory acts in the robotics lab. Yon now owns a robot repair shop and brothel named Granthle Circuitry in the Scrapper Mod.

Yon is unhealthily obsessed with JEN and was sending her binary-coded love letters, digital flowers, and software gifts until Security Chief Max Olthan paid him a visit. Yon is planning to download JEN's consciousness into an advanced sexbot that he is secretly building. Ingan Tathkee is on the verge of expelling him from the station entirely and this would certainly tip him over the edge.

Yon Granthle (Human Male Technician): AC 7 [12] (coveralls + Dex); HD 1; hp 4; THB +0; AT (weapon); SA Int 16, Technology 4; ST 18; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; ion stick, dagger, toolkit, minicomputer, sexbot remote.

ZHUUDAN BRADDUS G. WYGRATH

Braddus G. Wygrath a.k.a. "The Black Judge" is a Consortium Zhuudan (judge) who has lived aboard Tathkee Station for the last three years. Wygrath was run out of the Sterling Sector after an unknown scandal. He drinks heavy likwids and has been known to fall asleep on the stand. Although he lacks the full support of the Consortium Arbitras, residents of Tathkee Station view him as a representative of the Nine Laws. Ingan Tathkee feels it is in the station's best interests to support the rulings of the Sterling Court.

Zhuudan Braddus G. Wygrath (Human Judge): AC 9 [10]; HD 1-1; hp 3; THB -1; AT N/A; SA none; ST 19; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; black Zhudaan's robes, hidden flask containing strong likwid.



Varrulium is the source of the Varrul mining rush. It is a sparkling silver-gold ore found in large veins on rocky islands floating through the skies of the gas giant Varrul. Varrulium reacts with natural gases, causing it to glow with a soft light in the dark.

Varrulium ore is soft and malleable, but can be refined into a lightweight metal alloy that is highly resistant to energy effects including attacks from laser weapons, ion weapons, and even Star Swords. Other uses for Varrulium alloy are being researched by military, conservation, and tech industries.

Items fashioned from Varrulium alloy weigh half (1/2) as much, cost ten times (x10) as much, and produce the following effects:

- +2 AC to Starships or Vehicles vs. Energy Attacks; +3 Movement
- +2 AC to Personal Armor vs. Energy Attacks*
- +2 AC to Robots vs. Energy Attacks; +3 Movement
- +1 AC to the wielder of a melee weapon used against a Star Sword

Items coated with Varrulium alloy cost twice (x2) as much as the original item and produce the same AC bonuses noted above for 5d6 rounds of combat before the coating rubs off. This number should be rolled after the item is purchased and the player should keep track of it on his character sheet. The coating can be reapplied at the same cost.

*At the Referee's discretion, because of the lighter weight, characters may be allowed to wear Personal Armor that is one grade higher than what is normally allowed for their Class. For example, a character who can only wear Energy Cloaks may wear Light Armor made of Varrulium alloy. One who could only wear Light Armor may wear Scout Armor made from Varrulium alloy, etc.

COSTS AND RETURNS

The mining operations on Varrul use the standard Unified Systems Weights (USW) of olstas, porls, and grennes for calculating mass, although the Galactic Consortium is considering a change to the simpler TenBy system. The USW measurements are better explained below.

- One (1) gelt (gram) = 100 ic
 - One (1) olst (ounce) = 2,800 ic
 - One (1) porl (pound) = 44,800 ic
 - One (1) grenne (ton) = 89,600,000 ic
-
- Twenty-eight (28) gelts = one (1) olst
 - Sixteen (16) olstas = one (1) porl
 - Two thousand (2,000) porls = one (1) grenne

Note: The listed rates are for unrefined ore—refined Varrulium and Varrulium alloys can be worth ten, fifty, or even one-hundred times as much.

VARRULIUM DEPOSITS

Varrulium deposits are scattered all over Varrul. Finding and harvesting these deposits takes an investment of time, money, skill, and more than a little luck. Varrulium ore is found mainly in three forms—Dust, Nuggets, and Veins.

VARRULIUM DUST

Varrulium Dust consists of tiny, silver-gold particles of Varrulium ore.

On Varrul's floating islands, Varrulium Dust can sometimes be found loose in the dirt, but more often bonds with clear Ickon (see CHAPTER 0010: NEW ALIENS, PLANTS, AND CREATURES), cold plasma, and other heavy gases to settle into deep, shimmering “pools”. The oily mixture can be collected with industrial strength suction devices.

In the skies of Varrul, the dust bonds with clouds of clear Ickon and cold plasma, creating a distinct sparkle in the sky. These clouds produce an oily residue as if from thick smoke. Some mining vessels are equipped with large ventilation systems that collect the smoke for processing (either aboard the ship or later). However, their crews tend to suffer a disproportionate amount of V-poisoning (see below).

Extracting Varrulium Dust from the Ickon/plasma blend is no easy task. The mixture must be pressurized, superheated, and dissolved in special chromatography devices known as Varrulium Sifters. The process kills the Ickon while separating the dust from the gases.

Although Ickon pools and clouds are quite plentiful now, especially in the Middle Atmosphere, some offworlders have begun to question the morality of destroying the planet's ecosystem to harvest Varrulium deposits.

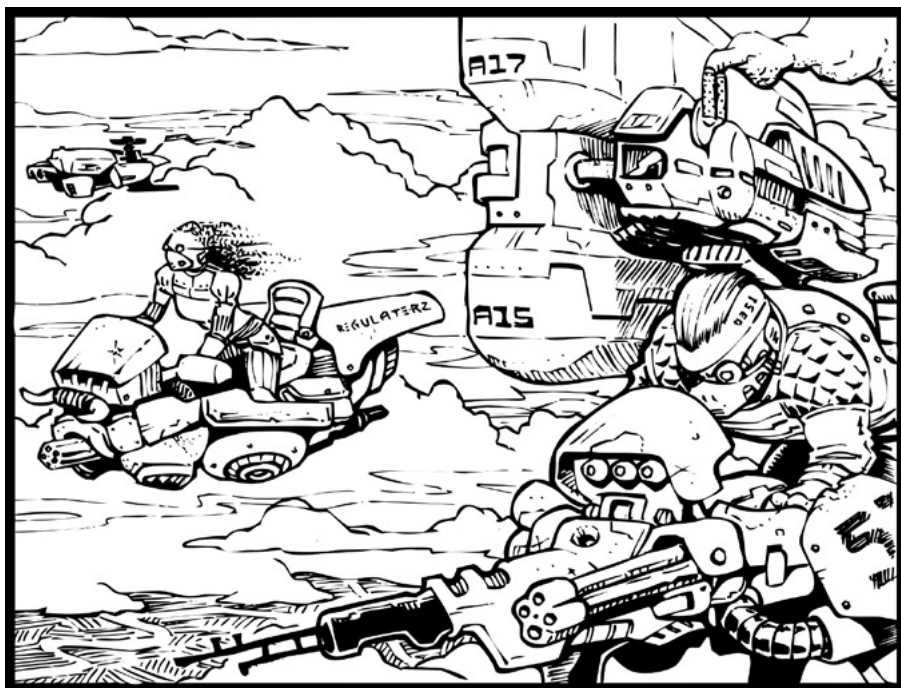
- Loose Varrulium Dust is found in portions of up to 1 gelt.
- Varrulium Dust extracted from Ickon pools is equal to 1d3 gelts.
- Varrulium Dust collected from Ickon clouds can net up to 1d6 gelts per cloud.

VARRULIUM NUGGET

Varrulium Nuggets are small chunks of Varrulium ore that are sometimes found on Varrul's floating islands. Varrulium nuggets often appear loose on the ground near Varrulium Veins (see below). However, some might have been scattered by animals or plasma storms.

Extracting Varrulium Nuggets is easily done by hand. However, recent reports suggest the cunning alien Tikatikatik "Bugs" have begun arranging loose piles of nuggets on floating islands to lure offworlders into an ambush.

- Varrulium Nuggets are found in portions weighing up to 1d10 gelts.



VARRULIUM VEIN

Varrulium Veins are large deposits of Varrulium embedded in the porous rock walls of a floating island.

If the island is uninhabited by savage Tikatikatik, the Varrulium vein tends to be small and concentrated in one area (large rock, cave, etc.). This rare type of unguarded strike is every independent miner's dream.

If Tikatikatik inhabit the island, the vein extends along the walls of their underground warrens, with the largest deposit located in the central chamber.

Extracting the ore from a Varrulium Vein takes a massive amount of time and effort. As electronic equipment is unreliable (and sometimes dangerous to use), much of the work must be done with primitive mechanical devices, beasts of burden, or by hand.

The Tikatikatik fiercely defend their warrens, so mercenaries are needed to protect the miners while they work. The danger continues even if the present Tikatikatik threat is eliminated. Veins can take days, weeks, or even months to fully extract, all the while subjecting miners to attacks by raiding swarms of Tikatikatik from other surrounding islands.

A typical Varrulium Vein contains 1d6 grennes of Varrulium ore. This is a massive return for a relatively small investment, which is why corporations are so quick to allocate resources to future operations.

V-POISONING

V-poisoning is a deadly sickness caused by inhaling excessive amounts of Varrulium Dust. It first manifests as red and blue striations in the blood vessels around the eyes and mouth. Weakness and nausea follow (all Attack Rolls, Physical Attributes, Armor Class, and Saving Throws suffer a -5 penalty). Long term effects of V-poisoning have not yet been determined.

The medical personnel at Tathkee Station can flush most of the poison from the body, however, the procedure is costly and requires full immersion in a cloiba juice tank (5,000 ic) for one (1) week, so few residents can afford this. Corporate miners and mercenaries who suffer from V-Poisoning are placed in stasis and sent for treatment at corporate facilities offworld, however, rumors suggest that this cargo seldom reaches its destination. . .



CHAPTER

0007

MINING AND OTHER BUSINESS VENTURES

Varrulium has drawn miners and mining interests from all over the galaxy. These may be giant corporate conglomerates, smalltime mining companies, or just lone independent miners hoping to strike it rich. The lure of a quick payoff may even be strong enough to draw the PCs into the action.

INDEPENDENT MINERS

Hundreds of Independent Miners have come to Varrul in search of easy wealth. Many are inexperienced prospectors who have spent their entire fortunes on the trip, desperately packing into transports to brave the harrowing journey through the Rul System. Others are former company employees who have become dissatisfied with low wages, harsh working conditions, and lack of advancement opportunities. Others are simply small starship crews looking to make a quick score.

Independent Miners scour the skies of the Upper Atmosphere in starships or modified skycraft, searching mainly for deposits of Varrulium Dust, but occasionally stumbling upon a few choice Nuggets and in ultrarare cases, unguarded Veins.

PRIVATE MINING COMPANIES

Private Mining Companies are larger mining operations backed by wealthy investors or groups of Independent Miners who have banded together for security. They consist of several mining crews searching the skies of Varrul for

Varrulium deposits and then sharing the results.

The typical Private Mining Company has access to three (3) to five (5) mining vessels and mining equipment. They often hire mercenaries (or PCs) to protect their crews from Tikatikatik raids and Varrulium pirates.

CORPORATE MINING COMPANIES

Corporate Mining Companies are large companies that make their living in the mining industry. These companies are in direct competition with one another, and this competition sometimes involves sabotage, espionage, and outright conflict.

Corporate Mining Companies are accustomed to squeezing out smaller mining interests by setting up large-scale mining operations, extracting all available resources, and then moving on to the next system. This common modus operandi has been unsuccessful on Varrul, leaving plenty of opportunities for Independent Miners and Private Mining Companies to make their fortunes.

CONSORTIUM INTERESTS

The Galactic Consortium has only recently begun to take an interest in Varrulium. Consortium scientists have confirmed its military uses and surveyors have been dispatched to determine the best ways to strip-mine Varrulium if the investment-to-return ratio is found to be acceptable. This has made the established mining interests nervous. Many feel it is only a matter of time before dreadnaughts are sent to blockade the system and seize all Varrulium for the might of the Consortium.

RESTORATION INTERESTS

Various elements of the Restoration have taken an interest in the Varrulium mining industry. Wealthy citizens sympathetic to the cause are backing Private Mining Companies in exchange for a percentage of the profits. They hope to use these profits to fund the ongoing struggle with the Galactic Consortium.

BUSINESS VENTURES

The Varrulium mining trade offers plenty of opportunities for the PCs to earn credits. These business ventures can lead to a number of different adventures aboard Tathkee Station or in the open skies of Varrul.

VARRULIUM PILOTS AND CREW

Skilled pilots and crewmen are needed to man the various mining vessels roaming the skies of Varrul. Small companies are always on the lookout for reliable crews. Larger corporations typically train and supply their own crews,

but accidents happen this deep in space and extra pilots or crew members might be hired on a provisional basis.

Pilots can expect to make 25 ic per day while crewmen make 5 ic per day, plus expenses (food, lodging, medical care, etc.). They receive an additional commission for any Varrulium mined.

VARRULIUM SCOUTS

If the characters have a vessel capable of navigating the skies of Varrul, they may find work scouting for Private or Corporate Mining Companies.

The PCs must descend into the Middle Atmosphere, locate a Tikatikatik Hive, and report its general location back to the company. Atmospheric conditions on Varrul make sensor and recording data unreliable, so there is no guarantee the company mining crew can locate the floating island before it drifts away.

Magnetic and ionic interference from Varrul's turbulent atmosphere makes electronic beacons and locators unreliable, so Varrulium Scouts have developed other methods for marking Tikatikatik Hives. One involves running balloons up long cables from the Hive to the Upper Atmosphere. Another involves a timed flare launcher. A targeting laser system has also been tried. Unfortunately, these devices are easily located and destroyed by Tikatikatik swarms. Other methods of Hive marking have proven just as unreliable.

The company typically pays all scouting fuel costs, with an additional commission to the PC crew for any Varrulium mined.

VARRULIUM MINERS

The PCs may decide to work as Varrulium miners for a time. Miners on Varrul have a high mortality rate, so employment opportunities are plentiful.

Normal company rates are 5 ic per actual work day plus expenses, with an additional commission for any Varrulium mined. When not working (i.e. flying in the mining vessel waiting for the Scout Team to return), company rates are reduced to 1 ic per day plus expenses. Specialists (geologists, explosives experts, etc.) can expect double to triple the normal rates.

Alternately, the characters might decide to try their own hand at private mining. The work is hard, with accidents, injuries, and death being common. Varrulium deposits can be located in Dust, Nugget, or Vein form throughout the Middle Atmosphere, but the easiest way to find a large amount of Varrulium is to locate a Tikatikatik Hive.

Although large-scale excavations by a small group of PCs are impossible, the characters may use a combination of stealth and Class Abilities to extract small portions of the Vein from the Hive.

MERCENARIES

There is no shortage of work for those willing to fight. Mercenaries are expected to eliminate all hostile Varrulian wildlife and take on Varrulium pirates and corporate rivals. As energy weapons and firearms are unreliable or even dangerous to use in Varrul's atmosphere, mercenaries must also be skilled in the use of melee weapons and various forms of hand-to-hand combat.

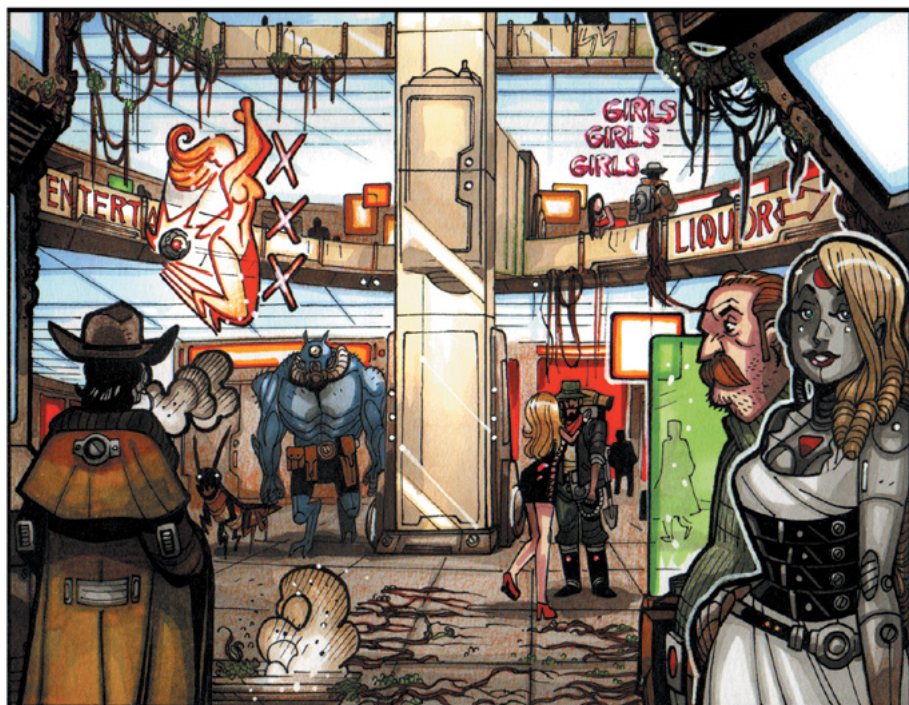
Mercenaries travel with mining crews (either aboard the mining vessel or inside their own ship), earning 10 ic per day, plus expenses. They receive an additional commission for any Varrulium mined.

BUG HUNTS

A few large Corporate Mining Companies have begun offering bounties of up to 10 ic for the head of every Tikatikatik. This is an effort to thin out the native population and make it easier for mining operations to commence. Hunters prefer to target Tikatikatik near floating islands so they can collect the heads from the dead. Mercenaries already on a company payroll are not eligible to collect these bounties.

HOOSHAR HARVESTS

The alien herd beasts known as Hooshar float through the Middle Atmosphere, feeding on sparkling clouds of Ickon. A thriving business in Hooshar parts has sprung up at Tathkee Station.



Hooshar fat is used for energy dampers, Hooshar nettles increase the power output of many electronic devices, and Hooshar organs are used in a variety of exotic remedies, potions, and poisons. About the only thing offworlders haven't found a use for is the Hooshar's elastic skin, which is peeled off and left to float along Varrul's currents.

A few resourceful individuals have started herding these beasts onto skyranches in the Upper Atmosphere. These ranches are built upon floating islands or derelict vessels and surrounded by manmade Ickon fields that can stretch for miles. Others routinely descend into the Middle Atmosphere to hunt and slaughter the beasts in the wild.

A Hooshar carcass nets 1 ic (calf), 5 ic (cow), or 10 ic (bull). The work is messy and dangerous—skyranches and Hooshar hunting parties are frequently attacked by Varrulian predators and swarms of hostile Tikatikatik.

SHOP OWNERS

There are more credits to be made from the miners than the mining itself—at least that's what many of the shop owners aboard Tathkee Station say. An investment is required if the PCs wish to go into business for themselves. The characters must first decide what type of business they wish to open (or purchase).

A down payment of at least 1,000 ic and the first month's rent is required (more for prime locations). The amount of rent is equal to the down payment and is expected to be paid at the beginning of each month. The cost of goods and additional services on an initial startup requires an investment equal to the cost of the down payment.

The character sets the rent when the property is first purchased and can only increase it afterward. The PC rolls 1d6 each month to see the return on his investment.

- 1 – 1/4 monthly rent
- 2 – 1/2 monthly rent
- 3-4 – 1x monthly rent
- 5 – 2x monthly rent
- 6 – 3x monthly rent*

*1/3 of these credits are obtained through outside means (brokering information, illicit sales, blackmail, etc.) which could lead to complications and adventures of the Referee's design.

For example, a Mercenary character wants to open a Weapons Shop. He decides to invest 2,500 ic in the shop. He must pay 2,500 ic as a down payment, 2,500 ic for the first month's rent, and 2,500 ic for initial startup fees for a whopping total of 7,500 ic before the first customer even walks through the door! The good thing is, there is almost a 70% chance he "breaks even" each month, with a 30% of turning a nice profit.



CHAPTER

0008

NEW CLASSES

The following new classes may be encountered on Varrul. With Referee permission, they may also be used by Player Characters.

BEASTMASTER

"Your way is the way of the sun and the stars. You travel alone in the Void. My way is that of the earth and the sky. Here, my friends are many and they are all about."

Also known as Beast Tamers, Beast Lords, and Beast Whisperers, the Beastmaster is able to befriend, control, and ride all manner of alien beasts. Beastmasters typically come from primitive cultures that have deep ties with the natural world. They despise pollution, sport hunting, and exploitation of natural resources.

A Beastmaster interacts with sentient lifeforms when needed, but prefers the company of beasts. In the civilized regions of the galaxy, Beastmasters find work as veterinarians, animal trainers, and animal breeders. In remote portions of the galaxy, Beastmasters work as herders, wilderness scouts, and travel guides.

Beastmasters sometimes become disillusioned with their former lives or corrupted by wealth, becoming everything that they hate—sport hunters, greedy corporate CEOs, etc.

TABLE 8-1: BEASTMASTER ADVANCEMENT

LEVEL	XP	HD	BHB	ST
1	0	1+1	+0	15
2	2,00	2	+1	14
3	4,00	3	+1	13
4	8,00	3+1	+2	12
5	16,000	4	+2	11
6	32,000	5	+3	10
7	64,000	5+1	+3	9
8	128,000	6	+4	8
9	256,000	7	+4	7
10	512,000	7+1	+5	6

WEAPON/ARMOR RESTRICTIONS: Beastmasters disdain modern weapons and prefer to travel light. They may wear atomic dusters, energy cloaks, light armor or scout armor, and are limited to archaic weapons such

as axes, clubs, daggers, whips, mono-daggers, mono-swords, mono-axes, plasma blades, spears, snap swords, staffs, swords, bows, slings, and alien variations of these weapons. They can also make use of physical shields, though not energy shields.

CLASS SKILL: Survival.

MODERN WEAPON: Beastmasters may choose to be proficient in one (1) modern weapon at 3rd-level, one (1) at 5th-level, and one (1) at 10th-level. The weapon must be a specific type such as a



laser rifle or grenade.

ANIMAL KINSHIP: Beastmasters receive a +2 bonus to all Skill Checks involving animals and alien beasts.

KEEN SENSES: Beastmasters have enhanced senses of sight, hearing, and smell that enable them to see in the dark for 40'. A Beastmaster can never be surprised unless steps are taken to mask these senses.

ANIMAL QUICKNESS: Beastmasters can harness their animal spirit to move at a faster rate for short periods of time. Animal Quickness adds +3 to the Beastmaster's normal Movement for a number of rounds equal to the Beastmaster's Experience Level. This ability can be used three times (x3) per day.

BUSHMAN'S TRICK: The Beastmaster projects a calming aura that can soothe even the most savage alien beasts. When confronted by a Beastmaster, an animal or group of animals must make a Saving Throw. Failure means the animals allow the Beastmaster to feed them, walk among them, and even ride them, at the Referee's discretion.

ANIMAL COMPANION: At 3rd-level, a Beastmaster can adopt an animal or alien beast as an Animal Companion. This Animal Companion can be any creature of 3 or fewer HD, such as a Jas'par or Lagomorph. The choice of creatures must be approved by the Referee.

When the animal first comes into the service of the Beastmaster it is perfectly mundane, though the Beastmaster can teach the animal a number of tricks equal to the Beastmaster's level and even has a limited telepathic link with the beast.

At 4th-level and every level thereafter, the Beastmaster can grant their Animal Companion one permanent benefit from the list below:

- **Increased Armor Class:** The Animal Companion increases their Armor Class by -1 [+1]
- **Increased Base Hit Bonus:** The Animal Companion increases their Base Hit Bonus by +1.
- **Increased Hit Dice:** The Animal Companion gains 1 Hit Die.
- **Increased Saving Throw:** The Animal Companion increases their Saving Throw by +1
- **Minor Meditation:** The Animal Companion gains the ability to use one 1st-level Meditation or Gift one time (x1) per day.
- The Animal Companion can select each of these benefits no more than three times (x3), though Increasing Armor Class, Base Hit Bonus, Hit Dice, or Saving Throws multiple times is cumulative.
- If the Beastmaster's Animal Companion is slain, he may call a new one into service, though any increased character traits or learned Gifts and Meditations are lost.

SAVING THROW: Beastmasters receive a +2 bonus to all Saving Throws made involving animals and attacks by animals. Beastmasters inflict a -2 penalty on all Saving Throws made by animals.

XP BONUS FOR HIGH CONSTITUTION: A Beastmaster with a Constitution of 15 or higher receives a 5% bonus on all Experience Points earned.

JACK OF STARS

"The game is Knight's Gambit, ladies and gentlemen. The ante is 100 credits. Ace of Stars counts as minus ten. Jack of Void wins any Reveal. Cut the deck and let's play."

The Jack of Stars is a cardsharp, gambler, and scoundrel extraordinaire. Chance is their plaything and Fate dances to their tune. Whether they're born with a guardian angel on their shoulder or they made a deal with the devil, no matter how bad things get, they always come out smelling like an Effrusian rose.

The Jack of Stars spends his time in gambling houses all over the galaxy. He is a skilled social manipulator with an uncanny aura of luck that aids his allies and confounds his enemies. While this strange kismet is a boon to the Jack and his traveling companions, he is never completely trusted—not even by his closest friends.

TABLE 8-2: JACK OF STARS ADVANCEMENT

LEVEL	XP	HD	BHB	ST	KISSED BY LADY LUCK
1	0	1	+0	12	2
2	1,250	1+1	+0	11	2
3	2,500	2	+1	10	3
4	5,000	2+1	+2	9	3
5	10,000	3	+2	8	3
6	20,000	3+1	+3	7	4
7	40,000	4	+3	6	4
8	80,000	4+1	+4	5	4
9	160,000	5	+4	4	5
10	320,000	5+1	+5	3	5

WEAPON/ARMOR RESTRICTIONS: The Jack of Stars prefers to avoid combat whenever possible, relying on light weapons and minimal armor for protection. They wear atomic dusters, energy cloaks, and light armor. Their weapons are limited to bladed gauntlets, clubs, daggers, energy slings, firearms, laser pistols, hold-out lasers, ion pistols, ion sticks, mono-daggers, mono-swords, and snap swords.

CLASS SKILL: Larceny.

BITING WIT: A Jack of Stars is such a master at manipulating emotions that he can use thinly veiled sarcasm and clever turns of phrase to drive his enemies into a rage. The target of these attacks must make a Saving Throw. If it fails, the target foregoes weapons and tries to attack the Jack of Stars with his bare hands. If combat continues for more than one (1) round, the target may switch to other weapons and attack normally.

SKILLED GAMBLER: The Jack of Stars is an expert at reading people and figuring odds. He may use these skills when engaging in games of chance, increasing his Larceny rating by two (2) for these purposes, to a maximum of 5. The Jack of Stars wins all ties.

KISSED BY LADY LUCK: Lady Luck is a fickle mistress, but the Jack of Stars has her charmed. The Jack of Stars may roll two (2) dice of the appropriate type when making an Attack Roll, Skill Check, or Saving Throw, and take the best result.

This is known as calling upon Lady Luck. It may be attempted a number of times per day equal to the Jack's Kissed by Lady Luck rating, as shown on Table XX: Jack of Stars Advancement.

However, if the Jack of Stars calls upon Lady Luck for aid and still fails, it is always considered a critical failure. The Referee should use this dramatic failure to add thematic and appropriate complications to the adventure.

MASTER CHEAT: Beginning at 4th-level, a Jack of Stars who chooses to cheat at a game of chance automatically wins the game. However, there is a 1 in 10 chance that the cheating is detected by one of the other players or an observer. This chance is increased by +1 each round, if the Jack continues to cheat.

If two Jacks of Stars are attempting to cheat one another, or the game of chance is otherwise rigged, the Jack of Stars with the highest Experience Level (or Wisdom) wins the game, but his opponent has a 4 in 6 chance of detecting the cheating.

SAVING THROW: The Jack of Stars receives a +2 bonus to all Saving Throws made to resist the effects of poisons and mind-altering affects, whether they come from drugs, mysticism, or some other source.



XP BONUS FOR HIGH CHARISMA: A Jack of Stars with a Charisma of 15 or higher receives a 5% bonus on all Experience Points earned.

STAR PREACHER

"Be strong in your faith. Be righteous in your deeds. Always spread the Word as if you were a dying man preaching to dying men."

Star Preachers are holy men who have devoted themselves to spreading the word of a particular gospel along the frontier of known space. They are strong in their faith, champions of law and order, and willing to fight and die for what they believe in. These brave men and women can feel the presence of the mystical energy known as The Way, although they may call it by other names.

Star Preachers come from a diverse variety of backgrounds and some have always been devout members of the cloth. However, many Star Preachers are former soldiers, mercenaries, or lawmen who grew tired of lawlessness and despair along the Galactic Edge while others lived for years on the wrong side of the law until some life-changing event made them take up the calling.

TABLE 8-3: STAR PREACHER ADVANCEMENT

LEVEL	XP	HD	BHB	ST
1	0	1	+0	15
2	2,250	2	+1	14
3	4,500	3	+2	13
4	8,000	3+1	+2	12
5	16,000	4	+3	11
6	32,000	5	+3	10
7	4,000	6	+4	9
8	128,000	6+1	+4	8
9	256,000	7	+5	7
10	512,000	8	+6	6

TABLE 8-4: STAR PREACHER MEDITATION ADVANCEMENT

LEVEL	1ST LEVEL	2ND LEVEL	3RD LEVEL	4TH LEVEL	5TH LEVEL
1	-	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-	-
4	1	-	-	-	-
5	2	-	-	-	-
6	2	1	-	-	-
7	2	2	-	-	-
8	2	2	1	-	-
9	3	2	2	1	-
10	3	2	2	2	1

WEAPON/ARMOR RESTRICTIONS:

Most Star Preachers were trained in combat before they took up the calling. They typically wear energy cloaks or atomic dusters for protection, but may don light armor, scout armor, and medium armor in times of trouble. The staff is their preferred weapon, but they can also use clubs, daggers, energy slings, firearms, hold-out lasers, ion pistols, ion sticks, mono-daggers, laser rifles, laser pistols, sporting lasers, and snap swords.

CLASS SKILL: Interaction.

FORCE OF WILL: A Star Preacher has such strong focus and convictions that he believes he can accomplish anything he sets his mind to. Once per day, the Star Preacher automatically succeeds at any Attack Roll, Skill Check, or Saving Throw of the player's choice.

IN THE FACE OF DEATH: The Star Preacher's unwavering faith gives him extra confidence in battle. When outnumbered or in the presence of Void creatures, the Star Preacher receives



a bonus of -2 [+2] to his Armor Class if he attacks foes head-on. In addition, the Star Preacher's fearlessness in the face of death is so inspiring that while actively combating those who serve the Void, all of the Star Preacher's allies within 60' receive a bonus of +1 to all Attack Rolls and his enemies receive a penalty of -1 to all Attack Rolls and morale checks.

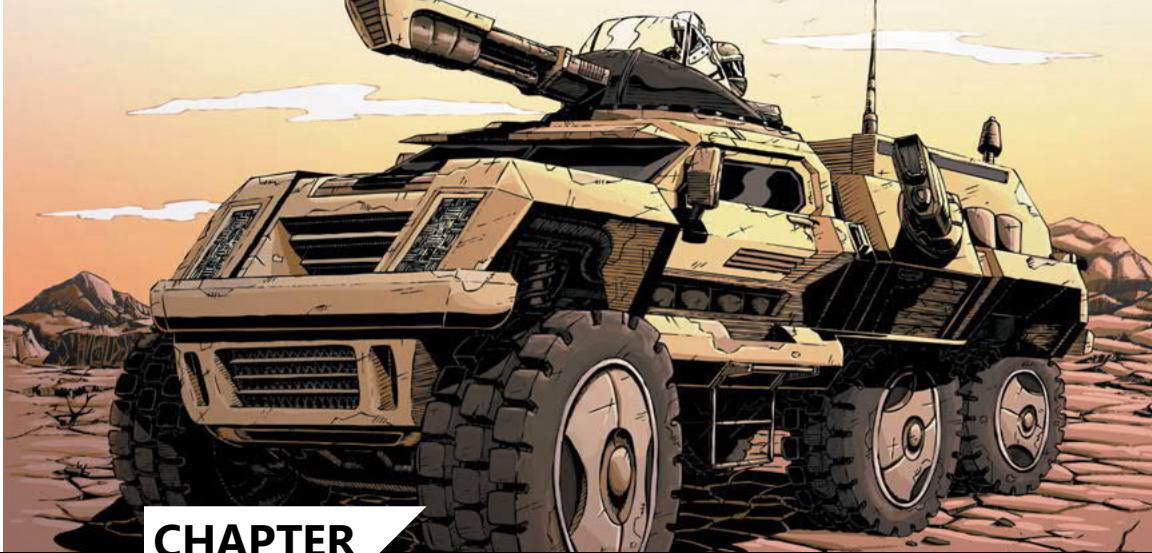
REVENANT: A Star Preacher who is reduced to 0 hp may make a Saving Throw each round to continue to fight or act. If the Saving Throw fails, the character falls unconscious, as noted in the House Rule: Edge of Death section in **Chapter 5: Personal Combat** of *White Star: Galaxy Edition*™. The Star Preacher is still slain when they reach an appropriate number of negative hit points.

MEDITATIONS: Beginning at 4th-level, Star Preachers are able to activate Meditations as shown on TABLE 8.4: STAR PREACHER MEDITATION ADVANCEMENT. Each day a Star Preacher spends time focusing his mind on Meditations, preparing a number of Meditations determined by his Experience Level as shown on TABLE 8.4 after three (3) turns of mind-cleansing exercises.

A Star Preacher requires eight (8) hours of consecutive rest before cleansing his mind. He can prepare the same Meditation more than once if he so chooses, but may not prepare more Meditations than the number determined by his Experience Level. Once the energy to activate a Meditation is used, the Meditation is lost. In addition, Star Preachers cannot use any Meditation which requires a Star Sword.

SAVING THROW: Star Preachers receive a +2 bonus to all Saving Throws made to resist attempts to influence them or cloud their mind.

XP BONUS FOR HIGH WISDOM: A Star Preacher with a Wisdom of 15 or higher receives a 5% bonus on all Experience Points earned.



CHAPTER

0009 NEW STARSHIPS AND VEHICLES

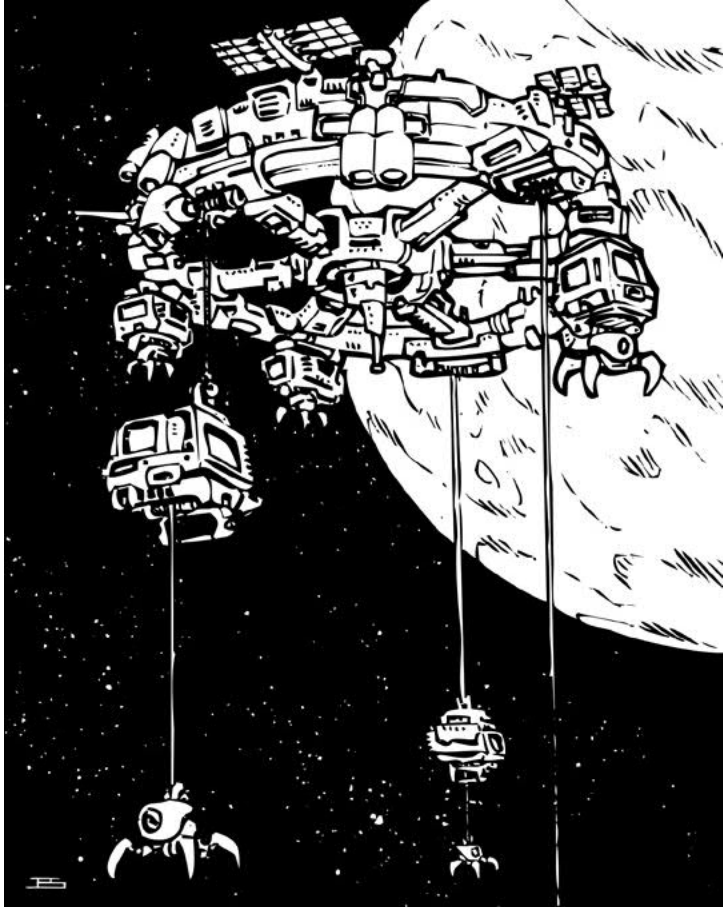
The skies of Varrul are filled with all manner of offworld vehicles and spacecraft. Most have been modified for mining purposes, with crews hoping to make a score and strike it rich. A few of the more common designs are listed below.

CATTURIAN MINING RING

CLASS:	Vehicle	HIT POINTS:	60
ARMOR CLASS:	7 [12]	MOVEMENT:	6 [Flight Ceiling 1,500 ft]
EXPLOSIVE DAMAGE:	5d6	PERSONAL PROTECTION:	Complete
TARGETING:	+0	REDUCTION	5
ATTACK:	Rayblaster x2 (4d6), Light Rayblaster x1 per OpsMod (2d6)		
MODIFICATION:	Energy Damper, Heat Shielding, Redundant Systems		

Cattivian Mining Rings are modified Wos Model-3 diving platforms designed by Bibblo Emergency Services, Inc. for rescue operations on the water planet of Woluzia Pil.

They consist of a Central Control Center (CCC) surrounded by a fabristeel outer ring. Individual Operations Modules (OpsMods) are attached to the outer ring.



The CCC and its outer ring cruise the Upper Atmosphere of Varrul. Probe robots (probots) attached to long cables are launched from the bottom of the CCC to scour the Middle Atmosphere looking for floating islands.

When an island is discovered, the probot anchors itself in the rock and an OpsMod descends along the length of its cable. The module secures itself to the island's surface, mercenaries create a defensive perimeter around the module, and the miners get to work.

Additional OpsMods are deployed, as needed. The OpsMod cables allow for rapid withdrawal in the event the mining operation becomes compromised by hostiles.

Catturian Mining Rings are the most popular and efficient mining vessels available on Varrul. They come in designs that support three (3), six (6), or twelve (12) Operations Modules. Each OpsMod holds a crew of up to thirty-six (36) miners and twelve (12) mercenaries and contains mining equipment, storage containers, and support vehicles. The cost is 15,000 ic plus 5,000 ic per OpsMod.

Two (2) rayblasters are mounted on the CCC and one (1) light rayblaster is mounted on each OpsMod to provide additional protection to mining personnel.

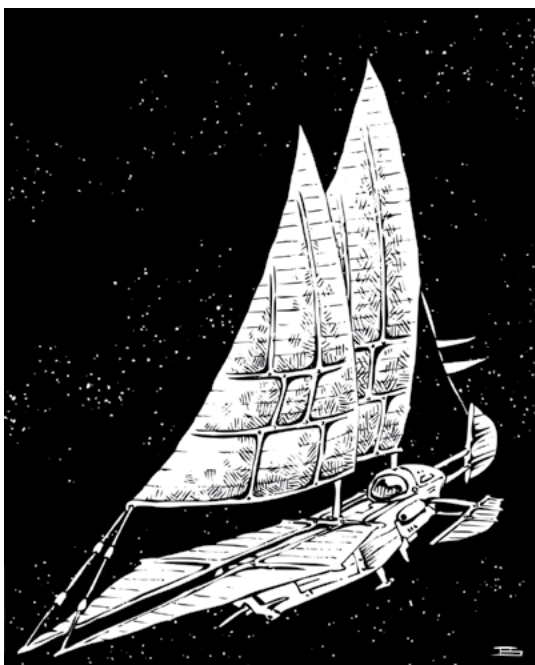
HAFFALIN SAIL SHIP

CLASS:	Vehicle	HIT POINTS:	30
ARMOR CLASS:	8 [11]	MOVEMENT:	18
EXPLOSIVE DAMAGE:	5d6	PERSONAL PROTECTION:	Complete
TARGETING:	+0	REDUCTION	3
ATTACK:	Light Rayblaster x2 (2d6)		
MODIFICATION:	Redundant Systems		

A Haffalin Sail Ship is a sleek, triangular vessel outfitted with solar sails that was originally designed to roam the peaceful green skies of the gas giant Haffal. The ship is powered entirely by sunlight and produces no energy signature to speak of, although it can be equipped with a Faster-Than-Light Drive for space exploration.

An optimal crew size is six (6), but the vessel can be operated by two (2). There is enough room to comfortably house twenty (20) additional passengers.

Sail Ships are often used as scouting vessels for independent mining operations. They are fragile and easily torn apart by plasma storms, however, they are fast enough to outrun most hazards, so it is up to the pilot to keep his crew safe. Sail Ships on Varrul often contain Redundant Systems that can be activated if the sails are damaged. The vessel costs 15,000 ic.



KORDOK LANDER

CLASS:	Starship	HIT POINTS:	100
ARMOR CLASS:	6 [13]	MOVEMENT:	3
SHIELD STRENGTH:	0	TARGETING:	+0
ATTACK:	Heavy Laser x2 (6d6), Medium Laser x4 (4d6), Light Laser x6 (2d6)		
MODIFICATION:	Faster-Than-Light Drive, Heat Shielding, Redundant Systems		

A Kordok Lander is an enormous starship designed by Kordok Contracts as an assault lander and troop transport for the former Quinlon Empire. It is practically a mobile city, with enough facilities to house and feed a crew of sixty (60), two-hundred fifty (250) miners, and one hundred (100) security personnel—although some companies pack them in even tighter.

The slow-moving Lander is equipped with scout ships, mining equipment, mining vehicles, storage containers, and a small ore refinery to maximize its operations. Once a floating island is located, the Kordok Lander descends and security personnel immediately begin exterminating all lifeforms on the island so mining operations can commence. After the Varrulium has been mined, the vessel lifts off and exits the Rul System with its precious cargo. Surviving personnel typically receive a portion of all profits from the ore.

Kordok Landers cost 250,000 ic and produce a huge return for the company. However, they are so large that no form of Energy Damper is powerful enough to mask its energy signature. This makes them highly susceptible to plasma storms and ion strikes. Despite the destruction of dozens of Landers, the larger corporations consider such loss of resources and personnel to be an acceptable return for their investment.

EARTHROLLER

CLASS:	Vehicle	HIT POINTS:	30
ARMOR CLASS:	6 [13]	MOVEMENT:	18 [Waterborne 3]
EXPLOSIVE DAMAGE:	3d6	PERSONAL PROTECTION:	+5
REDUCTION:	6	TARGETING:	+0
ATTACK:	Light Rayblaster Turret (2d6), Rollover (1d6 Vehicles; 3d6 Creatures)		
MODIFICATION:	None		

An earthroller is a large, durable, all-terrain vehicle with six or eight oversized, self-sealing tires. The earthroller requires a crew of four (driver, assistant driver, gunner x2) and can transport up to twelve (12) fully loaded troops and their supplies. An earthroller costs 10,000 ic.

Earthrollers are used mainly in places where skycraft would be impractical, such as in the web-strewn forests of Archenide or the storm-tossed skies of Brant'tun Mrru. The tires give it the ability to travel on water at reduced speed and maneuverability. Amphibious models have also been designed for underwater operations.

MINING JUNKER

CLASS:	Starship	HIT POINTS:	75
ARMOR CLASS:	6 [13]	MOVEMENT:	3
SHIELD STRENGTH:	0	TARGETING:	+0
ATTACK:	Light Laser Turret x4 (2d6)		
MODIFICATION:	Energy Damper, Faster-Than-Light Drive, Heat Shielding, Redundant Systems		

A Mining Junker is a slow-moving medium transport that has been specially converted for mining operations in the stormtossed skies of Varrul. With a crew of twenty (20), Mining Junkers typically transport one hundred (100) miners and fifty (50) mercenaries.

Mining Junkers contain redundant systems and bulkheads reinforced with heat-resistant plating, enabling them to better withstand the ion strikes and plasma storms common to Varrul.

The cargo hold is filled with mining equipment, mining vehicles, and storage containers. An array of retractable drills, earth movers, and cranes can also be extended from the ship's exterior to assist workers on the ground with mining operations.

Mining Junkers cost 30,000 ic. They are the primary vessels deployed by the Gundarran Mining Corporation, but they are also used by other mining operations. Mining Junkers are armed with four (4) light laser turrets to ward off Varrulium pirates as well as the hostile native species of Varrul.

SKYHAULER

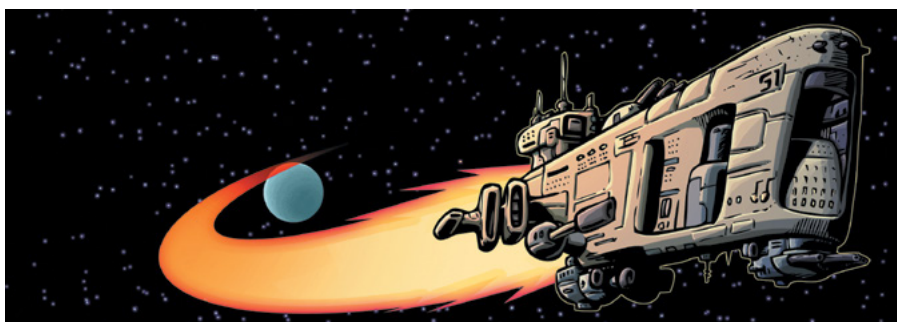
CLASS:	Vehicle	HIT POINTS:	40
ARMOR CLASS:	5 [14]	MOVEMENT:	18 [Flight Ceiling 1,500 ft]
EXPLOSIVE DAMAGE:	4d6	PERSONAL PROTECTION:	+5
REDUCTION:	5	TARGETING:	+0
ATTACK:	None		
MODIFICATION:	None		

A skyhauler is a utility skycraft designed for hauling large loads. Different models come with open or covered beds and some have even been outfitted as mobile dwellings. An antigrav trailer (or train of trailers) can be towed behind, further increasing its load capacity. A skyhauler costs 2,500 ic.

V-SKY ASSAULT SHIP

CLASS:	Starship	HIT POINTS:	75
ARMOR CLASS:	5 [14]	MOVEMENT:	9
SHIELD STRENGTH:	5	TARGETING:	+3
ATTACK:	Ion Charge x2 (2d6), Medium Laser x3 (4d6)		
MODIFICATION:	Energy Damper, Heat Shielding, Ion Charge (2), Ion Grappler, Redundant Systems		

A V-Sky Assault Ship is a small Assault Ship that has been outfitted for combat operations on Planet Varrul. It is commonly used by mercenary companies and Varrulium pirates. The ship requires a crew of six (6) and costs 100,000 ic.



MODIFICATIONS

The following Modifications were specifically designed to deal with Varrul's harsh atmosphere.

ENERGY DAMPER

Energy Dampers reduce the energy signature of a starship or vehicle, decreasing the chance of the vessel stirring up a plasma storm. The most common and reliable type of Energy Damper is the Na'tootei Power Converter, however, other similar devices exist. Typical cost for the device is 1,000 ic, with another 100 ic for installation. Energy Dampers must be entirely replaced every thirty (30) days to remain effective.

Recently it was discovered that lining power cords and maintenance shafts with fat from the native Hooshar beasts also dampens a vessel's energy signature. Although this is much messier, it is also a much cheaper alternative at 25 ic for materials and 5 ic to install. Full replacement is needed every week as the fat hardens and loses its insulative properties. Skyranches have been established and teams of Hooshar hunters have been assembled to track down the great herds to meet this demand.

HEAT SHIELDING

Heat Shielding is simply heavy, heat-resistant plating designed to protect vessels against superheated plasma rains. Heat Shielding provides a +1 bonus to the vessel's Armor Class, but reduces Movement by three (3). It is able to absorb plasma damage equal to the vessel's total Hit Points. Heat Shielding costs 100 ic per Hit Point to install or replace. Although the cost is high, most offworlders who have been caught in a plasma storm agree it is well worth the price.

REDUNDANT SYSTEMS

Redundant Systems consist of a secondary set of antigrav generators and controls that can be brought online if the primary propulsion system fails. They usually provide just enough power to allow the vessel to limp back to port. Activating the system in one (1) round requires a Technology check; otherwise, it takes one (1) turn to bring the system online. Redundant Systems are most useful after an ion strike incapacitates a vessel.



CHAPTER

0010 NEW ALIENS, PLANTS, AND CREATURES

A diverse assortment of alien lifeforms may be encountered on Tathkee Station or in the wild open skies of Varrul. A few of these lifeforms are listed below.

BORBRISIAN (PR. BOHR-BREES-SEE-AN)

ARMOR CLASS:	7 [12]	HIT DICE:	2
HDE/XP:	2/30	MOVEMENT:	15/15 (Brachiation)
SAVING THROW:	17	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+2
SPECIAL:	See below		
ATTACK:	By weapon		

Borbrisians are lanky, four-armed aliens with ape-like features who hail from the jungle planet of Obregath. Borbrisians are hard workers who can do the work of several men. They are a cheerful race with a fondness for strong drink, sporting events, and games of chance.



Borbrisians are extremely agile and can use their feet almost as well as their hands. In melee combat, they receive an extra attack every other round because of their additional arms. If they are able to make use of anything remotely like heavy vegetation (cables, rafters, etc.), they receive +2 to Initiative in melee combat because of their unorthodox fighting style, which involves jumping, rolling, and swinging from overhangs.

The Borbrisians on Obregath are divided between the “civilized” short-eared Borbrisians who dwell in ancient stone cities and the more primitive long-eared Borbrisians who dwell in jungle tribes. Obregath was absorbed into the Unified Systems long ago, when wealthy nobles from Planet Prime colonized parts of the planet.

The Borbrisians aboard Tathkee Station are employed by Sinthlife Industries. In their free time, they can be found carousing in cantinas that are overgrown with Uzaki vines or using the vines to traverse the different levels of the station. Borbrisians are particularly fond of the sweet-tasting Habrberry Wine, which they claim is best drunk while hanging upside down.

GUNDAR

ARMOR CLASS:	8 [11]	HIT DICE:	1+2
HDE/XP:	1/20	MOVEMENT:	9
SAVING THROW:	18	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+2
SPECIAL:	Skill bonus		
ATTACK:	By weapon		

The Gundar are short, stocky aliens with craggy features, bulbous noses, long beards, and thick fur on their forearms and shins. Gundar are known for their craftsmanship and hard work. They can be fierce fighters, who are slow to anger and even slower to forgive.

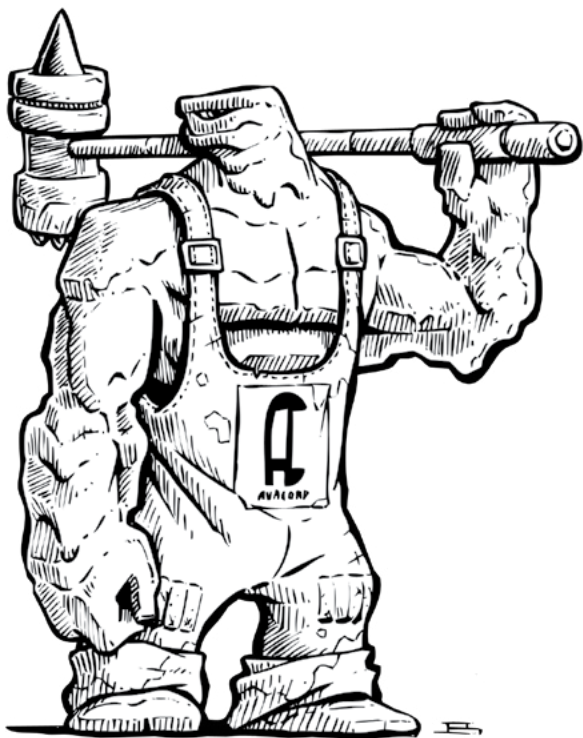
Gundar society is based around a family caste system. These castes are defined by various trades (soldier, mechanic, miner, carpenter, etc.) that are more than just familial affiliations. Job-related memories are genetically passed down from one generation of Gundar to the next, so every child born to a particular caste inherits the skills of their parents' trade (+1 bonus to all related Skill Checks).

The Gundar are shrewd businessmen who have developed a reputation for greed. The state-run Gundarran Mining Company long ago strip-mined their homeworld of Gunda Prime as well as all the planets in the Gundarran System for profit. This led to the formation of the great Gundarran Asteroid Belt, which is a nightmare to navigate.



The Gundar people live among a network of mobile mining stations scattered throughout the Gun System. Gundar geologists and surveyors are routinely sent to remote parts of the galaxy in search of ore and precious minerals. Once located, the next available mining station is deployed to exploit valuable resources.

A large number of Gundar can be found aboard Tathkee Station. Most are part of the Olkan Clan of the Gundarran Mining Company (GMINCO; pr. jee-MIN-koh). In their off times, they enjoy drinking and gambling in the station’s cantinas and casinos. The clan’s mobile mining station and refinery, OLAN III, is located in V-Space, just outside the Rul System.



MUDDT			
ARMOR CLASS:	5 [14]	HIT DICE:	3+1
HDE/XP:	3/60	MOVEMENT:	6
SAVING THROW:	16	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+3
SPECIAL:	See below		
ATTACK:	By weapon		

Muddts are a blocky alien species that seem to be made from wet clay. Muddts stand seven (7) feet tall and weigh an average of 700 lbs. They move slowly, but are extremely strong. Muddts have only one eye, but it is capable of seeing in the infrared spectrum.

Muddts are even-tempered hard workers, capable of operating in dangerous environments. They eat earth and water by absorbing it through their skin. Muddts do not breathe air. They cannot drown and are immune to most toxic gases, including those found on Varrul.

Muddts avoid arid regions when possible or wear full body hydro suits and masks designed to keep their flesh warm and moist. They are a pragmatic people who seldom complain as long as a hot communal mud bath awaits them after a hard day's work.

In combat, Muddts always lose Initiative and attack every other round, but deliver double damage with melee weapons upon a successful strike. They suffer half damage from piercing weapons of any sort, including firearms, spears, etc. and double damage from lasers and other heat-based attacks. Because a Muddt's hands and fingers are so thick, they are unable to use weapons such as laser pistols and laser rifles without special modifications to the weapons.

A rare few Muddts are fueled by a core of hot magma. These Muddts, known as the Muddta-Du, tend to be more volatile and prone to violence and crime. Three times per day they are capable of projecting a stream of hot magma from the palm of their hand. This attack has a range of 30 feet, does 2d6 damage, and can ignite combustibles.

The humid Muddt homeworld of Bidd Muddtal is comprised mainly of shallow oceans and mud flats. Muddt cities made of baked clay are built throughout the flats and many Muddts prefer to dwell in cave systems beneath the sea. A few spaceports and offworlder resorts take advantage of the hot mud springs scattered across the planet.

PHASOID

ARMOR CLASS:	9 [10]	HIT DICE:	1
HDE/XP:	1/20	MOVEMENT:	12
SAVING THROW:	18	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+0
SPECIAL:	Phasing		
ATTACK:	By weapon		

Phasoids are ephemeral alien creatures that resemble a cross between humans and Gray aliens. They are slender humanoids with long, thin digits and spindly arms and legs. Their skin is slightly translucent, revealing a network of blood vessels and shadowy internal organs.

Phasoids have the ability to become insubstantial at will. This allows them to pass through gases, liquids, and solids unharmed. The effect lasts as long as the Phasoid can hold its breath (usually about 2-3 minutes). A Phasoid's ability is negated by energy barriers such as forcefields or shields. If a Phasoid materializes inside a solid object, it dies instantly.

The few Phasoids left in the galaxy are shunned on most civilized planets because of their race's history of hiring out as assassins, bounty hunters, and spies. Phasoids are required by law to tell the authorities of their presence in a system, and most worlds in the Galactic Center still offer rewards for reporting unregistered Phasoids. Rumor has it that Phasoids who are turned over to Consortium authorities are given a choice—serve the Consortium or vanish. Permanently.

SETTARI

ARMOR CLASS:	6 [13]	HIT DICE:	4+1
HDE/XP:	5/240	MOVEMENT:	12 (in both forms)
SAVING THROW:	12	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+1
SPECIAL:	Shapeshifting, Charm Person		
ATTACK:	By weapon or Constriction		

Settari are a reptilian race of shapeshifters that are able to transform between humanoid form and that of a giant constrictor snake. In their normal state, they appear as humans with slitted eyes, although their internal physiology is entirely different. In snake form, they elongate to fifty feet or more. This process takes 1d3 rounds to complete, during which time the Settari may take no other action.

Settari are cruel creatures who have little respect for "hotbloods" (non-reptilian lifeforms). They are able to entrance followers (as per the Charm Person Meditation) and often develop a cultlike following that is used to further their own ends. Charmed followers are often fattened up to be devoured at the Settari's leisure.

Settari in humanoid form can wield any type of weapon, but prefer to leave fighting to their followers. In snake form, they attack with a powerful bite. Anyone bitten must make a Saving Throw to avoid being automatically wrapped in the Settari's coils. Constricted characters suffer automatic damage each round and must make an Athletics Check to break free of the Settari's grasp.

This Check suffers a cumulative -1 penalty per round as the Settari tightens its coils. After six (6) rounds, the character can only be freed by the Settari's choosing or its death.

A rare few Settari also possess a venomous bite (Saving Throw or die), and even fewer may possess Gifts or Meditations of the Referee's choosing.

The Settari homeworld of Halassu is located in the Gytarro System. The Settari are divided among ruling Houses, who dwell in great stone pyramids and are worshipped by the primitive apelike creatures native to Halassu's jungles. The Settari Houses maintain criminal enterprises across much of the known galaxy. They are sworn enemies of the Kaltoin and the Ickes Crocodila.

VALLORTA

ARMOR CLASS:	3 [16]	HIT DICE:	7
HDE/XP:	7/600	MOVEMENT:	12 (Fly 15)
SAVING THROW:	9	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+5
SPECIAL:	Invisibility, Life Drain, Paralyzing Gaze, Poison, Regeneration		
ATTACK:	Claws or Wings		

Vallorta are an ancient alien race that preys upon the life energy of sentient lifeforms. They appear as comely male or female humanoids with white skin, slightly ridged foreheads, and luminescent eyes. Their mouths are filled with pointed teeth and their fingers end in sharp black talons. Leathery wings extend from their shoulder blades. Vallorta typically fold these wings beneath loose robes to hide their appearance.

Vallorta are creatures of the Void and have a number of mystical powers at their disposal. Their most terrifying power is their ability to drain life energy. Anyone who stares into a Vallorta's eyes must make a Saving Throw or become paralyzed. After this, the Vallorta projects a long proboscis from its mouth, and inserts it deep into the victim's throat. This is known as the Death Kiss. The proboscis drains one (1) point of Constitution per round of contact.

The terrified victim is aware of the draining, but is powerless to resist. Once the Vallorta breaks contact, the victim falls into a deep sleep that lasts for 3d6 hours and is filled with nightmares. Upon waking, victims of 3 HD or more can make a Saving Throw in order to remember the attack. All others spend the next few days in a troubled daze.

Vallorta typically feed for 1d6 rounds at a time, returning over the course of several nights. The victim dies once reduced to 0 Constitution. If the Vallorta is killed or driven off, lost Constitution is regained at the rate of one (1) point per week.

In combat, a Vallorta strikes with its claws or slashes with its wings. A Vallorta's claws are poisonous. Anyone struck must make a Saving Throw or suffer hallucinations that impose a cumulative penalty of -1 to Attack Rolls, AC, Saving Throws, and Skill Checks for 1d6 days. These hallucinations sometimes recur weeks, months, or even years later and can drive the victims insane.

Vallorta regenerate injuries caused by physical damage (melee weapons, firearms, etc.) at the rate of 3 hp per round. Damage from heat or fire-based attacks (lasers, flamethrowers, etc.) heals at the rate of 1 hp per hour, but only if the Vallorta is surrounded by pure darkness.

A Vallorta's poison sac lies deep within its chest. If this sac is ruptured, the poison spreads into its organs, paralyzing the creature for 1d6 rounds as the sac regenerates and the poison is neutralized. If the sac is unable to heal (i.e. the Vallorta is transfixated by some long, sharp object. . .), the Vallorta remains paralyzed indefinitely. Intentionally targeting the poison sac requires a natural 20 on the Attack Roll (intent to do so must be stated before the attack is made).

Vallorta spend most of their time invisible to both sight and recording devices. While invisible, they can only be seen by those who have been affected by a Vallorta's life draining ability or by those who Walk in the Way. Because of this, many people believe the Vallorta are a myth used to scare travelers away from the Galactic Beyond.

Vallorta live for hundreds of years and may have developed other Gifts, Meditations, or powers, at the Referee's discretion.

NATIVE SPECIES OF VARRUL

Planet Varrul supports a thriving and harmonious ecosystem. Gribbet bugs and microscopic organisms known as Ickon provide food to creatures like Salima Eels, Broosts, and Hooshar. These in turn are devoured by predatory species such as Dirch Dogs, Kendree Krabs, and Kilana Beasts. Bacteria from their spoor helps produce more Ickon.

Miners, skyranchers, mercenaries, and other offworlders have begun to disrupt this delicate balance, burning the Ickon clouds in search of Varrulium Dust, hunting wildlife for sport, and slaughtering the great Hooshar herds for profit. The long-term effects of these actions could have devastating consequences for the planet.

NEW FLORA

The following flora are some of the more common plants found on the floating islands of Varrul. The Referee may add new flora, as needed.

CAVE TREES

The gnarled white roots of the Cave Tree grows in tangled thorny briar patches aboveground. Underground, the trees provide lush purple foliage which is used to pad nests and sleeping areas.

GAHTH BUSH

A Gauth Bush is a gnarled pinkish growth with tangled limbs, red leaves, and long orange feeder roots. Gauth Bushes feed off Ickon and carrion. Their roots grow quickly, spreading over carcasses and consuming everything except shell and bone.

ILIK MOSS

Ilik moss is a bluish bioluminescent lichen that grows in thin strands along tunnels, inside derelict vessels, and other dark places on Varrul. In Tikatikatik Hives, the moss combines with the lustrous Varrulium to illuminate the twisting tunnels with a soft glow.

ORTER VINES

These thorny blue vines grow over and under rocks. Their leaves are deep purple in color, with juicy, edible berries encased in thorny shells. The Tikatikatik find the berries mildly intoxicating and use them for certain spiritual rituals. Like most flora and fauna native to Varrul, the berries are poisonous to offworlders.

RYA GRASS

Rya grass is a thin red weed that grows in clusters near thick pools of Ickon.

NEW FAUNA

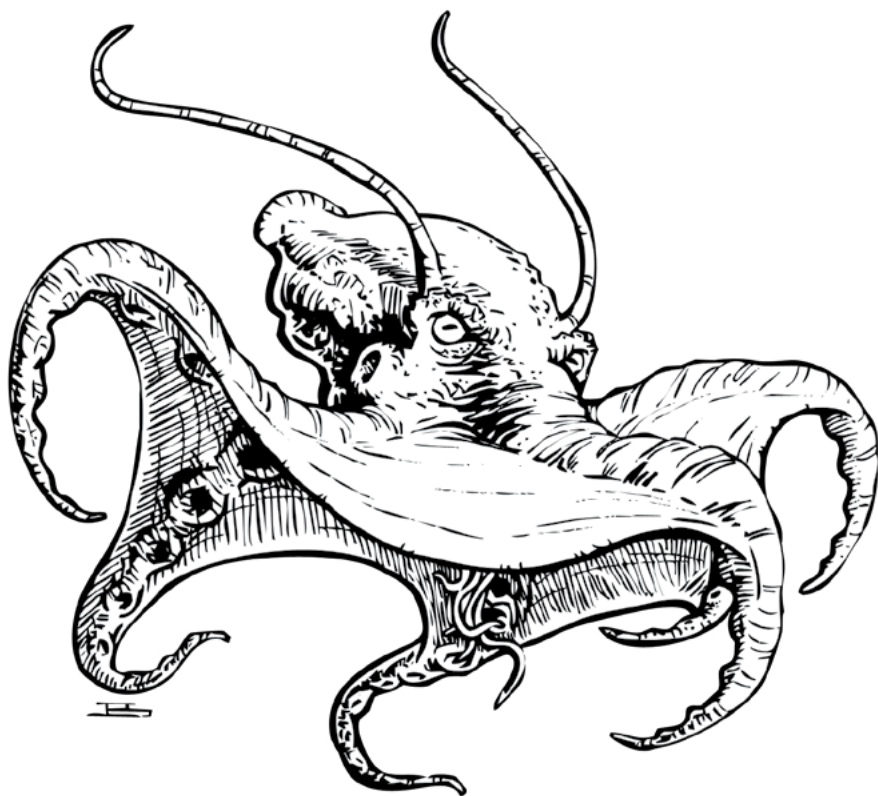
The following new creatures are native to the gas giant Varrul. Most of these creatures are unable to survive for long in oxygen-rich places such as Tathkee Station.

BROOST

ARMOR CLASS:	6 [13]	HIT DICE:	5
HDE/XP:	5/240	MOVEMENT:	6 (Fly 15)
SAVING THROW:	18	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+2
SPECIAL:	See Below		
ATTACK:	Tentacle Strike (1d2 Dmg)		

Broosts are large cephalopods that appear similar to Corretian octopi. Sail-like folds along their bodies, thin webbing between their tentacles, and excretion of lighter-than-air gases from their undersides allows them to float along updrafts and air currents. Broosts travel in small family clusters of 1d6, and feed on Ickon. They are hunted by Varrul's larger predators.

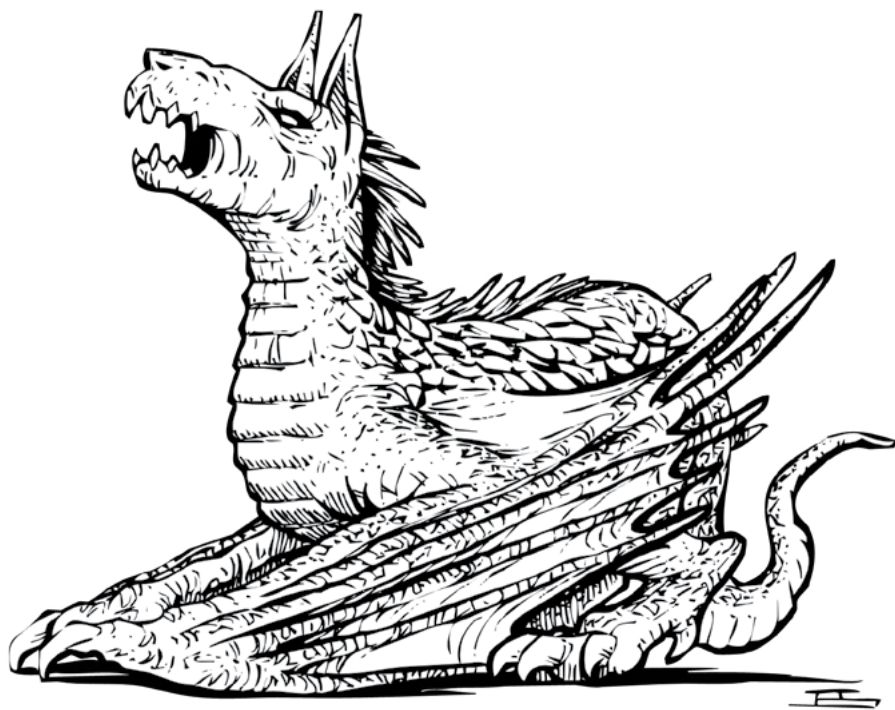
If attacked, Broosts prefer to flee in different directions, fighting only if cornered. Adult Broosts are capable of emitting a burst of explosive blue fire that causes 2d6+2 damage (Saving Throw for 1/2) in a 15' cone and triples their flying Movement for six (6) rounds. If forced into combat, Broosts attack with their tentacles.



DIRCH DOGS

ARMOR CLASS:	7 [12]	HIT DICE:	2
HDE/XP:	2/30	MOVEMENT:	6 (Fly 15)
SAVING THROW:	18	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+2
SPECIAL:	Flight		
ATTACK:	Bite		

Dirch Dogs are vile-looking, winged reptiles that travel in packs of 2d6. They are scavengers that prefer to feed off leavings, but also attack weakened or injured creatures. Dirch Dog packs often glide along air currents, following the great Hooshar herds across the sky. They are sometimes found with Tikatikatik swarms.



GRIBBET

Gribbets are a species of tiny insect found throughout Varrul. Like Ickon, they are a vital part of the planet's ecosystem, serving as a food source and also helping to dispose of carrion. There are actually many types of Gribbets, although they are all very similar in appearance—some are harmless, others are annoying pests, while others are deadly parasites that spread sickness and disease.

HEBEL BIRD

ARMOR CLASS:	8 [11]	HIT DICE:	1
HDE/XP:	1/10	MOVEMENT:	3 [Fly 15]
SAVING THROW:	19	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+1
SPECIAL:	Flight		
ATTACK:	Bite (1d3 Dmg)		

Hebel Birds are reptilian scavenger birds with long necks, leathery wings, and oversized heads capped by a crest of black feathers. They are solitary creatures that roost high up on rocky islands and seldom fly far from their nests. The sight of a Hebel Bird means a floating island is close by—miners consider it extremely unlucky to kill one. A captured Hebel Bird unerringly returns to its nest if freed. It is possible that some innovative skyranch or mining operation may find a way to exploit this ability.

HOOSHAR

ARMOR CLASS:	6 [13]	HIT DICE:	6
HDE/XP:	6/240 (6/400 for bull)	MOVEMENT:	3 (Fly 12)
SAVING THROW:	18	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+2
SPECIAL:	See below		
ATTACK:	Tentacles		

Hooshar are giant, balloon-like jellyfish that float slowly on updrafts and air currents in the skies of Varrul. Hooshar travel in great herds that number in the thousands. They are the primary food source of predatory creatures such as Dirch Dogs, Kilana Beasts, and the dreaded Hacta Worms.

Hooshar are docile creatures that prefer to flee if threatened. If cornered, they strike with their tentacles. One out of every ten Hooshar is equipped with electrified nettles, capable of delivering an electric shock for 2d6+2 damage (Saving Throw for 1/2). If the herd is attacked, these Hooshar move to its defense. Although the Hooshar are asexual, offworlders identify those with nettles as “bulls” and the others as “cows”.

Offworlders have found ways to put Hooshar fat, nettles, and organs to a variety of uses. The trade in Hooshar parts is rising and some have even suggested that killing off the Hooshar may be the best way to cripple the Tikatikatik and Varrul’s other vicious predators.



ICKON

Ickon are a diverse collection of microscopic organisms that inhabit the skies and floating islands of Varrul. They are the primary food source for lifeforms such as Salima Eels, Broosts, and Hooshar.

In their natural form, Ickon are clear in color. However, they bond with cold plasma gas and Varrulium dust to give them an iridescent sparkle. This combination is lighter than air, allowing them to float in glittering clusters that can stretch for miles through Varrul's open skies. These clouds have an oily texture, like thick smoke. They can be scattered by storms, strong air currents, or even passing starships, producing a scintillating swirl.

On floating islands, iridescent pools of Ickon, cold plasma, Varrulium Dust, and heavy gases sink into rocky depressions. These pools can be harvested by Varrulium miners using a sifting process that extracts the dust, but kills the Ickon in the process.

KENDREE KRAB

ARMOR CLASS:	4 [15]	HIT DICE:	3+3
HDE/XP:	3/60	MOVEMENT:	12 (Fly 15)
SAVING THROW:	18	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+3
SPECIAL:	Flight		
ATTACK:	Bite (1d3 Dmg)		

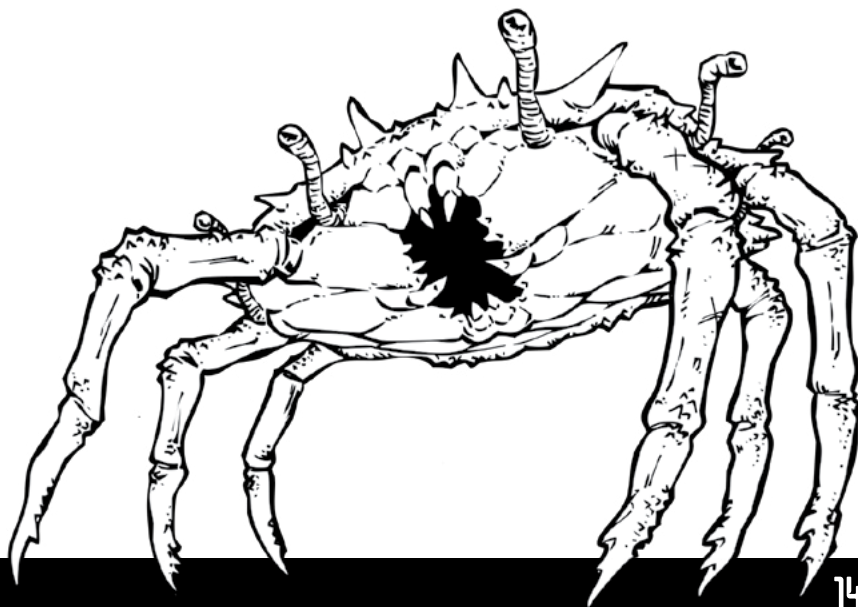
Kendree Krabs appear as clawless Corretian crabs with skin folds between their legs. These folds, along with a foul-smelling, lighter-than-air chemical naturally excreted by the Krabs, helps them catch the wind and glide along Varrul's thermal updrafts.

The Kendree Krab's large maw is located on the underside of its body. Its six (6) eyes are attached to the end of tentacular stalks space around its body, so the Krab can never be Surprised.

In combat, the Kendree Krab prefers a dive attack, descending rapidly on the unwary and closing its legs around its prey in a viselike grip. The attack does 1d6 damage from the impact. Captured prey is automatically bitten each round. Trapped characters may make an Athletics Check each round to break free. Difficult victims may be carried aloft and dropped from great heights or released altogether.

The Krabs are sometimes ridden into battle by Tikatikatik who latch onto their backs and direct the Krabs with their foreclaws. This is a terrifying sight for offworld miners.

Kendree Krabs are one of the few edible creatures native to Varrul and have become a delicacy among some residents of Tathkee Station. If captured young, some believe the Krabs can be domesticated for riding or use as pack animals.



KILANA BEAST

ARMOR CLASS:	0 [19]	HIT DICE:	8
HDE/XP:	8/800	MOVEMENT:	12
SAVING THROW:	11	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+8
SPECIAL:	Plasma Breath Weapon (3d6), Vehicle Combat Creature		
ATTACK:	Gore (2d6), Claw x2 (2d6), Claw x4 (1d6)		

A Kilana Beast is a large, predatory crustacean with a thick abdomen, twelve spiny legs, and six clawlike appendages. Its head is covered by white, hairlike tresses, and a large nose horn juts from the front of its beak.

Kilana Beasts dislike light and live deep in rocky caves on the floating islands of Varrul. Their diets consist mainly of Ickon and Orter berries, but they can consume the flesh of other lifeforms, particularly those foolish enough to enter their lairs. The floor of a Kilana Beast's cave is often littered with loose Varrulium Dust equal to a full olst or more. Collecting it is the hard part.

In combat, the Kilana Beast attacks solitary opponents with its nose horn and two main claws. If multiple targets are present, it also utilizes its secondary claws.

Kilana Beasts are also capable of breathing bursts of superheated plasma once every three (3) rounds, up to three times (x3) per day. This devastating breath weapon inflicts 3d6 damage (Saving Throw for 1/2). Charred, melted rock is often a sign that one has entered a Kilana Beast's lair.

Kilana Beasts can live for hundreds of years.

Note: Kilana Beasts inflict damage and function as if they are vehicles, and their statistics are written for use in Vehicle Combat.

RUTZA

ARMOR CLASS:	8 [11]	HIT DICE:	1 hp
HDE/XP:	0	MOVEMENT:	9 [Swim 6]
SAVING THROW:	19	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+0
SPECIAL:	Breathe Air		
ATTACK:	Bite (1 Dmg)		

Rutza are small, lizard-like scavengers that eat Gribbets, carrion, and just about anything else. Rutza breed quickly. Their bodies are highly adaptable to environmental changes and some have even managed to thrive among the Uzaki vines of Tathkee Station. If left unchecked, a Rutza infestation can lead to computer system failures, as Rutza are drawn to wires and other energy sources to make their nests.

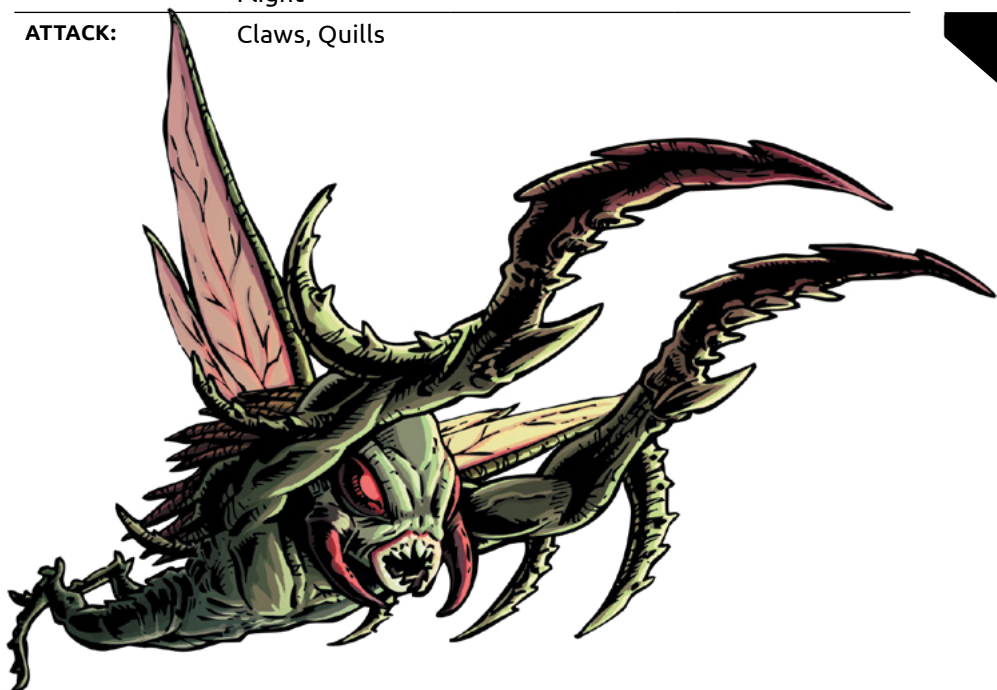
SALIMA EEL

ARMOR CLASS:	7 [12]	HIT DICE:	1+1
HDE/XP:	1/15 (1/30 for poisonous)	MOVEMENT:	15 (Fly)
SAVING THROW:	19	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+0
SPECIAL:	Flight, Poison (?)		
ATTACK:	Bite (1d2 Dmg)		

Salima eels are fat, four-foot long eels that wriggle their way through the skies of Varrul, feeding on Ickon clouds and Gribbet colonies. On floating islands, they can be found hiding in the porous rock near deep Ickon pools. They are harmless creatures that prefer to flee, and fight only if cornered. An extremely rare species of Salima eel possesses a poisonous bite (Saving Throw or die). Native species such as the Tikatikatik consider the soft, salty meat of a raw Salima Eel a tasty delicacy.

TIKATIKATIK

ARMOR CLASS:	6 [13]	HIT DICE:	2+1
HDE/XP:	2/30	MOVEMENT:	12 [Fly 15; Climb 12]
SAVING THROW:	18	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+2
SPECIAL:	Flight		
ATTACK:	Claws, Quills		



The Tikatikatik are a savage species of flying insect that attack in swarms of 4d6. Tikatikatik have long foreclaws, sharp mandibles, and dozens of quills along the back of their carapace. In combat, they strike with their foreclaws or hurl their quills for ranged attacks. Tikatikatik have amazing equilibrium and can cling to sheer surfaces with their foreclaws and rear legs, even hanging upside down. They sometimes ride Kendree Krabs and are accompanied by Dirch Dogs. More information about the Tikatikatik can be found in CHAPTER 0012: TIKATIKATIK.

VARRULIAN POWER SUCKERS

ARMOR CLASS:	7 [12]	HIT DICE:	1
HDE/XP:	1/20	MOVEMENT:	[Fly 12]
SAVING THROW:	17	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+1
SPECIAL:	Flight, Leech Energy, Energy Burst		
ATTACK:	Bite (1d3)		

Varrulian Power Suckers are a smaller species of Power Sucker native to Varrul. The creatures attach themselves to the power cables and energy cells of mecha, vehicles, and starships so they can feed.

If one successfully attaches to a starship, the starship's Movement is reduced by -1. Vehicles and mecha have their Movement reduced by -5 for each attached Power Sucker. A mecha, vehicle, or starship can have a maximum number of power suckers required to reduce its Movement to 0 before it is unable to move at all, needing them to be removed before it can move again.

Varrulian Power Suckers prefer to flee, fighting only if cornered. In combat, they attack with a vicious bite. If struck by a melee weapon, the Power Sucker emits a defensive Energy Burst that inflicts 1d6+1 damage on all creatures within a 10' radius (Saving Throw for 1/2). Power Suckers are immune to this blast.

Varrulian Power Suckers typically travel in packs of 3d6. They have grown accustomed to the planet's atmosphere and cannot survive in the vacuum of space.

YUHACTA WYRM

ARMOR CLASS:	-2 [21]	HIT DICE:	14
HDE/XP:	14/2,600	MOVEMENT:	12 [Fly 12]
SAVING THROW:	5	TOTAL HIT BONUS:	+12
SPECIAL:	Flight, Ionic Pulse (15d6), Starship Combat Creature		
ATTACK:	Mandible (3d6)		

Yuhacta Wyrms are enormous, segmented worms with wide chitinous heads covered with bony spikes and six (6) mandibles sharp enough to rend starship hulls. Yuhacta Wyrms are named after Barl Yuhacta, the first miner to survive such an attack. Only a dozen or so creatures are believed to exist on Varrul.

Yuhacta Wyrms fly through the skies of Varrul by undulating their bodies and emitting lighter-than-air vapors from their underbellies. They prefer to live in the thicker gases of the Middle Atmosphere and are almost never seen in the Upper or Lower Atmospheres unless they are chasing prey.

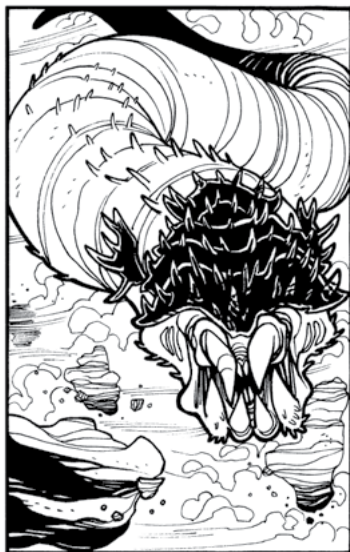
Yuhacta Wyrms are voracious carnivores that attack on sight, unless they have recently fed. They have learned that shiny metal objects often carry tasty surprises inside, so they do not hesitate to attack starships, skycraft, or mining operations.

Once per day, a Yuhacta Wurm is capable of emitting an Ionic Pulse (25d6 Dmg) which affects all ships, devices, and equipment within a 300-foot diameter.

The fluid in a Yuhacta Wurm's stomach crystalizes over time, forming what is known as Chuhoth Crystals. These crystals are sometimes passed through the Wurm's digestive tract. The crystals are ion-absorbent. Any device (robot, weapon, Star Sword, etc.) powered by a Chuhoth Crystal is immune to ionic effects, including the ion strikes and ion surges common to Varrul. A half dozen Chuhoth Crystals may even be enough to shield a skycraft or small starship, at the Referee's discretion.

Only a rare few Chuhoth Crystals have surfaced among offworlders. The crystals immediately resonate with those who Walk in the Way and may provide other benefits including bonuses to certain Gifts and Meditations, at the Referee's discretion.

Note: Yuhacta Wyrms inflict damage and function as if they are starships, and their statistics are written for use in Starship Combat.





CHAPTER 0011

OPEN SKIES OF VARRUL

The turbulent skies of Varrul are fraught with danger. Hostile alien creatures, clouds of poison gas, magnetic fluctuations, ion surges, and plasma storms make navigating the planet's atmosphere a nightmare. Listed below are a few of the more common hazards and concerns encountered when flying through the open skies of Varrul.

SENSORS AND COMMS

Sensors and communication devices operate normally aboard shielded vessels such as space stations or starships. However, magnetic fluctuations and ionic interference render them practically useless outdoors. Operators must make a Technology Check every time they wish to communicate or run a sensor sweep. If the check fails, there is a chance the sensor or comm system suffers an Ion Surge (see below).

WEAPONS AND SHIELDS

A vessel's shield generator works normally. However, because of the interference, its weapons do not gain the benefit of any Targeting. The vessel's computers simply cannot lock onto targets with any degree of accuracy.

FLIGHT CEILINGS

Varrul's strange magnetic distortions enable skycraft to operate freely in the planet's atmosphere without concern for normal flight ceilings. This has opened the door for anyone with a skycruiser to prospect for precious Varrulium.

CARTOGRAPHY

The planetary features of Varrul are impossible to map. The "islands" float along invisible magnetic waves that are impossible to chart or predict, so finding an island is literally blind luck. Returning to that island is even more difficult. This is one of the main obstacles to the Varrulium mining trade. Native creatures are believed to have some way of navigating the skies of Varrul, but this method (if it exists) is unknown to offworlders.

In game terms, this means that the topography of Varrul's skies is constantly changing. No trip is ever the same, leaving the Referee free to insert places such as Badland Clusters, Derelict Clusters, and Tikatikatik Hives, as needed. The characters should have no problem returning to Tathkee Station as long as they return to the Upper Atmosphere where the interference is less intense.

POISON GASES

The gases of Varrul's atmosphere are extremely toxic to most lifeforms. The air in the Upper Atmosphere is breathable, but most offworlders wear breathing masks to avoid any long-term health effects. Exposure suits are required in the Middle Atmosphere as the deadly toxins can be absorbed through the skin. No one knows what precautions are needed in the Lower Atmosphere, but it is best to assume the worst.

A character who breathes the toxic gases in the Middle Atmosphere begins choking and seizing immediately. After 1d3 rounds, the character must make a Saving Throw each round or die.

If the Saving Throw is made, the character can only perform limited actions (crawl to safety, patch the leak, pull the lever to close the airlock, etc.) for one (1) turn before passing out. Death occurs one (1) turn later. If the character is moved to a breathable environment, all Attack Rolls, Skill Checks, Physical Attributes, Armor Class, and Saving Throws suffer a -3 penalty for 1d6 days.

A character whose skin is exposed to the toxins in the Middle Atmosphere breaks out in hives and has difficulty breathing. After 1d6 turns, the character must make a Saving Throw each turn or die.

If the Saving Throw is made, the character can only perform limited actions for 1d3 turns before passing out. Death occurs one (1) turn later. If the character is moved to a nontoxic environment, it takes 1d6 turns to recover, after which time all Attack Rolls, Skill Checks, Physical Attributes, Armor Class, and Saving Throws suffer a -1 penalty for 1d3 days.

FLAMMABLE GASES

A number of flammable gases are found in Varrul's atmosphere. A character who rolls a natural "1" on any 1d20 roll involving a combustible device (firearm, proton missile, grenade, etc.) or a natural "6" on any Skill Check involving a combustible device must make a Saving Throw. Failure means the device explodes, causing 1d6+1 damage to all within fifteen (15) feet (Saving Throw for 1/2).

ION SURGE

A random ion surge can occur at any time. This is simply a burst of charged ion particles that gathers suddenly and disperses in a flash of light. A character who rolls a natural "1" on any 1d20 roll involving an energy device (energy weapon, ship's sensor, robot, etc.) or a natural "6" on any Skill Check involving an energy device must make a Saving Throw. Failure means the device's circuits are fried by ions and must be replaced.

PLASMA STORMS

The skies of Varrul are frequently rocked by storms, the worst of which are filled with charged ionic particles and superheated plasma. Plasma storms are characterized by fierce winds, burning rains, and lightning-like ion strikes. The plasma appears as streaks of bright yellow or orange inside the normal reds, blues, and purples of Varrul's roiling clouds.

Plasma Storms are drawn to energy emissions such as from a starship, shuttle, skycraft, extended laser combat, or mining operations involving machines or robots. They rarely materialize in the Upper Atmosphere unless a large energy source is present (such as from a space station).

In the Middle Atmosphere, there is a 1 in 6 chance per hour that a Plasma Storm gathers around a flying vessel. If an Energy Damper has been installed in the vessel, this chance drops to 1 in 6 per day. If the vessel's normal energy output increases significantly (such as from prolonged combat), there is an additional 1 in 6 chance of attracting a Plasma Storm.

Once a storm begins to gather, the starship pilot or vehicle operator may make a Navigation Check to outmaneuver it. If the check fails, the vessel is caught in the storm.

PLASMA EFFECTS

The superheated drops of liquid plasma are worse than acid. Any starship caught in the storm automatically suffers 1d2 damage per round from the burning rains. There is no way for a starship pilot to avoid this.

A vehicle operator may make a Navigation Check each turn to "ride the storm" and avoid damage to his vehicle. Flying creatures familiar with Varrul's atmosphere may make a Survival Check. If the check fails, vehicles suffer 1d3 damage per round while creatures suffer 1d6 damage per round.

Plasma storms typically last for 1d6 turns before dispersing, so failing a Skill Check often results in death unless suitable cover is available.

IONIC EFFECTS

Pilots (starship or vehicle) must also make a Saving Throw to avoid the dangerous ion strikes that accompany each storm. If the Saving Throw fails, the vessel is struck by ionic lightning, frying all ship's systems, including weapons and shields. Vessels equipped with the Redundant Systems Modification may bring their backup systems online.

A vessel that loses power while flying has a 2 in 6 chance of plummeting to the Core. Otherwise, the vessel is left adrift, floating aimlessly along the planet's invisible magnetic tides. If towed to Tathkee Station or another repair facility of the Referee's design, the vessel's electronics system must be entirely refitted at a cost of 1/3 the vessel's normal value.

MAGNETIC TIDE

Magnetic fluctuations are common throughout the Rul System, especially on Varrul. The largest of these roil through the skies like great magnetic rivers, carrying floating islands and other debris in their wake. Some magnetic tides are gentle and easy to traverse while others are so strong that a vessel may become trapped in its grasp and flung to some distant region of the planet. The Referee can use Magnetic Tides to setup adventures in distant parts of Varrul.

VARRULIAN WILDLIFE

The wild predators roaming Varrul's stormy skies are hostile to offworlders. The most cunning of these are the savage Tikatikatik (Bugs), but other creatures are just as dangerous. Some are even large enough to attack flying vessels such as starships or skycraft.

PLACES OF NOTE

The following places of note may be found in the Open Skies of Varrul.

TATHKEE STATION

This suborbital station is located in the Upper Atmosphere. It is the primary spaceport on Varrul and acts as a base of operations for most mining companies. Tathkee Station has somehow avoided the worst of Varrul's storms. It is subject to attack by Tikatikatik swarms, but these have been easily driven off by the station's defenses.

BADLAND CLUSTERS

Badland Clusters are islands of floating rock that are inhabited by clumps of Varrulian vegetation and wildlife. Some of these islands have always been barren while others are all that remains of strip-mined Hives (see below). Varrulium pirates sometimes use these islands as temporary bases. A few skyranches surrounded by manmade Ickon fields have also been established upon Badland Clusters. Tikatikatik swarms occasionally use the islands to rest before and after conducting raids against offworld vessels, skyranches, or mining operations. Badland Clusters may be found in the Upper and Middle Atmospheres.

DERELICT CLUSTERS

Derelict Clusters are the hulks of ionized or wrecked ships and other heavy equipment floating along invisible magnetic tides in the Middle Atmosphere. Some of these vessels are recent (mining vessels, Varrulium pirate ships, etc.). Others have been here for many years and might contain ancient technology or lost alien lore. Derelict Clusters may be inhabited by desperate survivors or by hostile alien wildlife. A few skyranches have also been established on abandoned Derelict Clusters.

Derelict vessels are subject to Intergalactic Salvage Law—if no one is aboard, the vessel is considered abandoned and may be claimed as salvage. Rumors of unethical salvage crews murdering survivors in order to claim the vessel are not uncommon.

TIKATIKATIK HIVES

Islands of porous rock float along Varrul's magnetic tides and thermal updrafts. Many of these islands are inhabited by Tikatikatik swarms and are known as "Hives". The Tikatikatik live in labyrinthine warrens beneath the surface, surrounded by rich veins of Varrulium ore. Tikatikatik Hives are the prime targets for Varrulium miners. They are most commonly found in the Middle Atmosphere, but may rise into the Upper Atmosphere or descend into the Lower Atmosphere for short periods of time.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (OPEN SKIES OF VARRUL)

The open skies of Varrul provide plenty of opportunities for adventure. The following encounters assume the PCs are exploring the Middle Atmosphere in a starship or vehicle.

1. DERELICT VESSEL: The PCs encounter a wrecked Catturian Mining Ring floating along on a magnetic tide. The vessel was destroyed during a plasma storm. Its OpsMods have been torn away, leaving only the central ring. The wreck is worth 1,000 ic if it can be towed back to Tathkee Station. A cluster of

Kendree Krabs has made its nest inside the CCC and must be dealt with before salvage operations can begin.

Kendree Krab (1d6+2): AC 4 [15] (natural); HD 3+3; hp 17; AT 1 (bite); THB +3; SA Dive Attack, Flight; ST 18; MV 12/15 (Fly); XP 3/60.

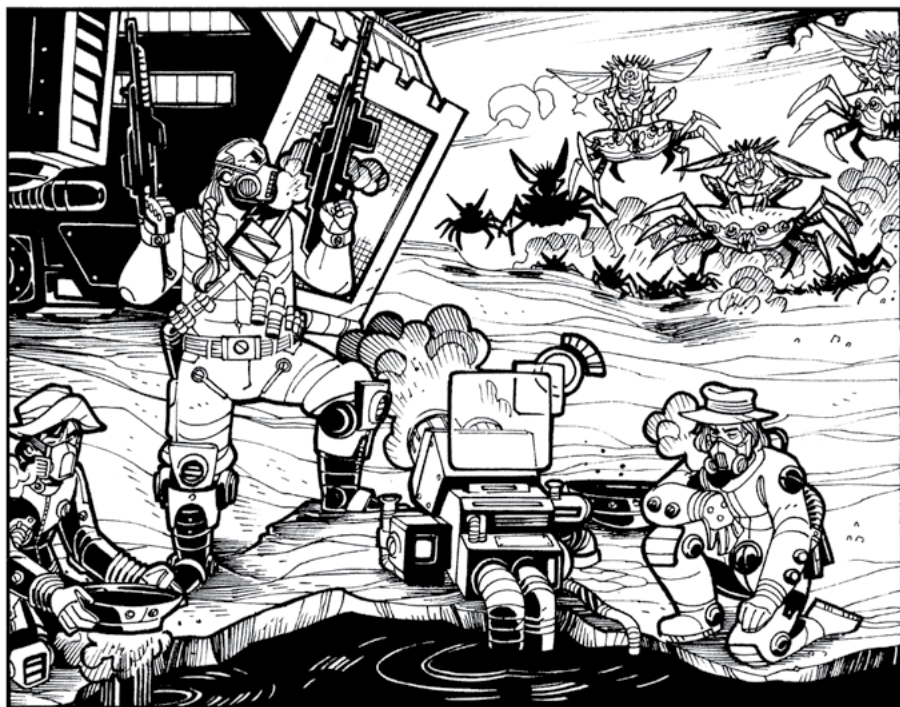
2. HIVE ACTIVITY: The characters spot several Hebel Birds circling over a floating island. Closer inspection reveals Tikatikatik flying in and out of several caves.

The characters have located an active Tikatikatik Hive! They may attempt to sneak in and steal Varrulium from the walls or seek assistance from mining vessels in the area.

A Kordok Lander belonging to Brillback Industries is cruising in the Upper Atmosphere. If the PCs can lead them back to the Hive, they are entitled to a cut of the profits of any Varrulium mined.

Locating the Hive requires an arbitrary 1d20 die roll. The roll is typically successful on a roll of 20 or greater, with +1 bonuses added for things like Navigation Skill, relevant Class Abilities, Gifts or Meditations, or experience flying through the skies of Varrul.

The Referee decides whether or not the Hive assault is successful. The Hive contains a Varrulium Vein equaling one (1) grenne. If the PCs participate in the actual assault, they receive an even larger cut of the profits.



3. HOOSHAR HERD: The characters come upon a large field of sparkling Ickon. An enormous Hooshar herd numbering in the thousands drifts through the field, feeding on the Ickon as they go. A few small packs of Salima Eels and Dirch Dogs drift on the outskirts of the herd.

The impressive sight could present a business opportunity for those who wish to cash in on the price of Hooshar fat, nettles, and organs. If the characters begin slaughtering the Hooshar, a swarm of 3d6 Tikatikatik (some mounted on Kendree Krabs) arrives and attack. Alternately, the Shade Riders from the Skybike Gangsters encounter (see below) can arrive and start blasting away at the herd for fun.

Tikatikatik (3d6): AC 6 [13] (natural); HD 2+1; hp 9; AT 1 (claws, quills); THB +2; SA Flight, Death Spiral; ST 18; MV 12/15/12 (Fly/Climb); XP 2/30.

Kendree Krab (2d6): AC 4 [15] (natural); HD 3+3; hp 17; AT 1 (bite); THB +3; SA Dive Attack, Flight; ST 18; MV 12/15 (Fly); XP 3/60.

4. IONIC LIGHTNING: The characters encounter a freak surge of ionic lightning. The pilot of the PC vessel must make a Saving Throw. If the Saving Throw fails, the vessel is struck by ionic lightning, frying all ship's systems, including weapons and shields. Vessels equipped with the Redundant Systems Modification may bring their backup systems online normally.

Otherwise, the vessel is left adrift, floating aimlessly along the planet's invisible magnetic tides. If towed to Tathkee Station or another repair facility of the Referee's design, the vessel's electronics system must be entirely refitted at a cost of 1/3 the vessel's normal value.

5. MINING JUNKER DOWN: The characters encounter a Mining Junker owned by the Vantom Digs Mining Company, just as internal explosions rock its hull. Escape Pods eject as the vessel plummets down into the planet's Lower Atmosphere.

If the PCs assist with rescue, Vantom Digs rewards the characters with 100 ic each. Later investigation reveals that a rival company named Stinz Refineries sabotaged the ship's engines. Vantom Digs may attempt to hire the characters to retaliate.

6. POWER SUCKERS: The PC vessel passes through an exceptionally dark stretch of clouds. When they emerge, a flock of thirteen (13) Varrulian Power Suckers have attached themselves to the hull.

Shipboard alarms immediately go off, signaling sudden power drain. The characters must land on a nearby floating island to remove the creatures, but doing so attracts a swarm of 2d6+1 Tikatikatik who attack on sight.

Varrulian Power Sucker (13): AC 7 [12] (natural); HD 1; hp 4; AT 1 (bite 1d3); THB +1; SA Flight, Leech Energy, Energy Burst; ST 17; MV 12 (Fly); XP 1/20.

Tikatikatik (2d6+1): AC 6 [13] (natural); HD 2+1; hp 9; AT 1 (claws, quills); THB +2; SA Flight, Death Spiral; ST 18; MV 12/15/12 (Fly/Climb); XP 2/30.

7. PUNITIVE RAID: The PCs encounter a posse made up of one (1) light transport, three (3) skyhaulers, and four (4) skybikes from the 1-Tree-Bolt

skyranch. They are seeking retaliation against the Tikatikatik for the slaughter of several ranch hands and mining families.

Their leader is an emotional skyranch foreman and former bounty hunter named Genn Callob. Genn asks the PCs to join their group, promising bounties for any Tikatikatik heads they recover.

The large number of vessels automatically causes a plasma storm to gather, scattering the posse before it can locate any “Bugs”.

Genn Callob (3rd-level Human Bounty Hunter): AC 5 [14] (medium armor); HD 3; hp 15; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +2; SA Str 15, Athletics 2, Technology 2; Survival 1, Subduing Attacks, Master Tracker; ST 13; MV 12; XP 3/60; laser rifle, laser pistol, holdout laser, club, dagger.

8. SKYBIKE GANGERS: A gang of twelve (12) skybikers known as the Shade Riders decides to play a game of “Dunggian Chicken” with the PC vessel. If the characters do not alter course, the skybikers turn away at the last second, then circle back to attack the PCs for three (3) rounds before zooming off into the sky. If any skybikers are killed, the rest of the gang seeks revenge on the PCs later.

Skybiker (12): AC 7 [12] (light armor); HD 1; hp 4; THB +1; AT 1 (weapon); SA none; ST 19; MV 12; HDE/XP 1/15; laser rifle, laser pistol, dagger.

Skybike (12): Vehicle; AC 5 [14]; hp 15; EXD 2d6; PP +1; RED 3; MV 30 (flight ceiling 1,500 ft); TAR +1; AT Light Rayblaster (2d6) [operator-linked]; MOD Energy Damper.

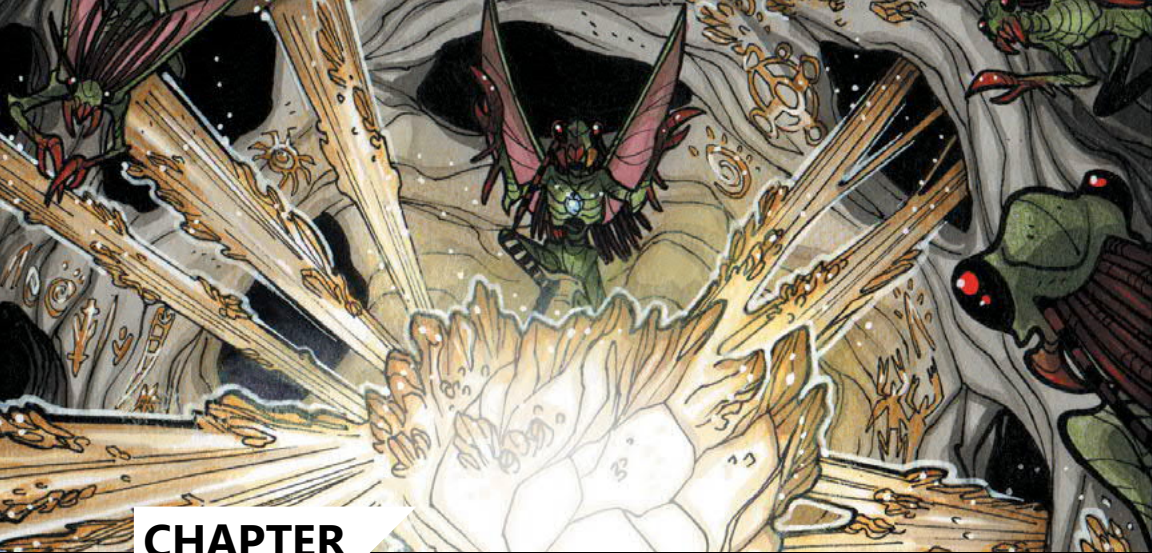
9. TIKATIKATIK SWARM: The PCs are ambushed by a Tikatikatik swarm numbering 4d6 warriors. The “Bugs” descend on the PC vessel from the clouds above using their Death Spiral dive attack. They fight until half of their number are killed before retreating. This is a good way to show the PCs that they are not entirely protected just because they are inside a vessel.

Tikatikatik (4d6): AC 6 [13] (natural); HD 2+1; hp 9; AT 1 (claws, quills); THB +2; SA Flight, Death Spiral; ST 18; MV 12/15/12 (Fly/Climb); XP 2/30.

10. VARRULIUM PIRATES: The characters see a light transport pursuing a group of independent miners in a battered skyhauler. The transport is crewed by a band of pirates known as the Dangar Sharps. The skyhauler has been struck by several ion charges and has slowed almost to a crawl. The miners frantically request assistance from the PC vessel.

If the PCs attack the pirates, check normally for the chance of a plasma storm gathering. The pirates fight until their vessel is reduced to 25 hit points or less. If the PCs kill or drive off the pirates, the miners give them 500 ic worth of the 1,000 ic of Varrulium they have mined over the past month. The characters also earn the goodwill of other independent miners on Tathkee Station.

aLathenn-class Light Transport (Full Sharps Ahead): Starship; AC 6 [13]; hp 50; SS 0; TAR +0; AT Laser (2d6) [pilot-linked]; MOD Energy Damper, FTL Drive; MV 9.



CHAPTER 0012

TIKATIKATIK

The Tikatikatik are a primitive race of insectile aliens native to the gas giant Varrul. Tikatikatik dwell on the rocky islands that float through Varrul's turbulent skies. They are a spiritual people who believe the planet is the living embodiment of their deity, who they call the Great Wanderer. They believe they can feel this deity's presence all around them.

The various Tikatikatik tribes have existed in a state of conflict for countless years, competing with one another for food and territory in the skies of Varrul. Tikatikatik war parties would raid rival Hives, stealing food, grubs, Kendree Crabs, and prisoners to be sacrificed or be used as slaves. Recently, however, the tribes have begun to unite against their common enemy—the offworld invaders.

The Tikatikatik are extremely hostile towards offworlders, who they call Hroolatt (demons). Visitors to Varrul view the Tikatikatik as savages that attack on sight, and many believe they are not sentient at all, but simply cunning predators. Although this is not the case, it does make it easier for miners, skyranchers, mercenaries, and other interests to exploit Varrul's resources and justify the race's extermination.

APPEARANCE

The average Tikatikatik stands approximately 6 1/2 feet tall with some reaching a height of 7+ feet. Their bodies are green or blue, with reddish features. A Tikatiktik's eyes are large, with a nictating membrane for protection. Their mandibles are flanked by tusks that are used to tear flesh and rend meat.

A Tikatikatik's limbs are long, and their bodies are covered by a hard

carapace. Chitinous wings extend from behind clusters of quill-like spikes that cover their backs. The Tikatikatik are capable of flight, but prefer to glide along the thermal air currents and magnetic waves coursing through Varrul's turbulent skies.

Many Tikatikatik decorate their bodies with dyes, body modifications, and other trappings to mark their achievements. This makes them appear even more savage and fierce.

GENDER

The Tikatikatik are divided between males and females. Each gender is open to any Path (see below) and each member plays a vital role in the tribe's success. Physically, males tend to be larger (+1 Str) and have more vibrant coloring while females are more resilient (+1 Con), more agile (+1 Dex), and possess a greater number of back-quills.

LANGUAGE

The Tikatikatik speak their own language, which is a combination of mandible clicks, throat chirps, wing flutters, and sign language. The language is difficult for offworld races to understand and almost impossible for them to replicate—even electronic devices have a hard time translating words into Galactic Standard.

Diplomacy robots and other insectile races must make an Interaction Check to understand the basic meaning of any communication with the Tikatikatik. All others must make a Saving Throw. The character receives a cumulative +1 bonus for every week spent in the company of the Tikatikatik. After three (3) months of contact (or three (3) weeks of contact for a diplobot or insectile race), the Skill Checks and Saving Throws are no longer required.

The Tikatikatik have no written language. However, tribal Mystics shape primitive Vicha (story patterns) into the Varrulium lining the walls of their Hives (see below).

SOCIETY

The Tikatikatik are divided into tribes, with each tribe making its home inside the warrens of a floating island. These islands are known as Hives. A typical Hive contains approximately three to five hundred tribesfolk.

Each member of the tribe is believed to be descended from the tribe's First Ones—the First Warrior, the First Worker, and the First Mystic to establish the tribe's Hive. These ancestors are held in the highest regard.

The entire tribe is an extended family that stems from these First Ones. Tikatikatik also form their own family units within the tribe. This is a strong bond known as Hreecha. Hreecha families may be expanded by new matings and the adoption of newly matured hatchlings. Hreecha are more than just kinfolk—they are lifelong friends who would fight and die for one another.

GOVERNMENT

The tribe is governed by the A'chatrak (War Chief), the V'chee (Head Mystic), and the Teeku (Keeper of the Hive). These three act as a Tribal Council that decides tribal policy by majority vote, however, they often listen to input from prominent tribesfolk regarding important matters concerning the tribe.

The War Chief holds the final say in issues of war and raiding. The Head Mystic handles anything to do with mediation, the spirits, or the Great Wanderer. The Keeper of the Hive oversees the defense, expansion, and overall future of the Hive itself.

LAWS AND PUNISHMENT

The Tikatikatik have no formal laws. They are expected to show courage in the face of danger and treat others with respect, particularly elders and mystics.

Disrespectful behavior, theft from fellow tribesfolk, or irreverence towards the Great Wanderer can get the Tikatikatik ostracized from his tribe or even exiled. This is a fate worse than death for most Tikatikatik.

Although squabbles between tribesfolk occur, they are expected to work together and come to some sort of arrangement. The exception to this is the Kutar Duel (see below).

RELIGION

The Tikatikatik worship a benevolent deity they call Varrichik (The Great Wanderer). According to their legends, the Great Wanderer once traveled across the universe, spreading his knowledge of Acheevak (The Way), the mystical energy that ties all living things together. A thousand-thousand worlds were uplifted by his passing and the very stars sang praises to his name.

Alas, there were those who opposed the Great Wanderer's teachings and chose a darker path. They sought to corrupt Acheevak for their own gain and soon, the Great Wanderer found himself beset on all sides by powerful Hroolatt demons. A fierce battle was waged, and the demons were vanquished, but the Great Wanderer had grown weary from his exertions and was forced to begin the Long Sleep. This marked the current era of Tikatikatik reckoning, which is known as the Time of Slumber (T'kees).

The mystics say that one day, Varrichik will awaken from its sleep and return to his wandering. The Tikatikatik will make the journey with him, bringing peace and harmony to the universe, which they call the Skies Beyond. This will begin the era known as the Time of Travels (T'chika).

Blessed and glorious be that day.

BIRTH

Males and females mate freely for reproduction and pleasure within their Hreecha. Females normally enter estrus once per year. However, when the number of males in the tribe becomes too low (from famine or war), the females of the Hive can enter estrus up to four times per year.

Females in estrus prefer to mate with males in their Hreecha before other males of the tribe. The egg laying process takes a single day and begins a month after fertilization. Approximately twenty (20) egg sacs are laid, with only a handful failing to hatch three (3) months later.

The average Tikatikatik lifespan is approximately fifty (50) years, although some elders have lived to be well over one hundred.

YOUNGLINGS

Tikatikatik are birthed in communal hatcheries known as Eecha. These chambers are tended by Workers who see to the needs of the egg-laying female and then bury the eggs in a foul mass of regurgitated meat and Gribbet bugs. The young are born in a larval state and slowly eat their way out of the chamber.

Over the next few weeks, the grubs are allowed to explore the Hive, being fed scraps of food by adult Tikatikatik. The grubs grow appendages, becoming larger and stronger in a series of molts (usually occurring once every other week).

A few months after their birth, the grubs grow their first protective carapaces. This is known as the Hachaka (Hardening) and means the younglings are large enough to choose their own Chak (Path) and start contributing to the Hive. They are adopted into Hreecha families and are expected to earn their own keep.

Akitika (Awakening) is a grub's passage into true adulthood. It comes when the grub grows its first set of wings, which is symbolic of the Tikatikatik's oneness with the Great Wanderer. A tribal Mystic holds a ritual for the youngling when this happens, giving it a name and formally welcoming it into the tribe.

ADULTS

Adult members of a Tikatikatik tribe follow a certain Chak (Path). There are three Paths that may be chosen, and two other Paths that are not. Each Path plays a vital role to the success of the tribe.

Alternate statistics for the different types of Tikatikatik Paths are listed in the description. The Referee should feel free to increase the number of HD, Gifts, and other Special Abilities for leaders, elders, and exceptional members of the tribe.



TIKATIKATRAK: The Tikatikatrak (or Atrak) is the Path of the Warrior. These are the tribe's hunters and warriors. They routinely brave Varrul's open skies in search of fresh meat to bring back to the Hive. They also protect the Hive from rival raiding parties and other threats. Atrak leaders are chosen from those who have shown bravery and earned fame in battle or the hunt. The War Chief is the tribe's most respected and accomplished of these warriors.

Tikatikatrak Warrior: AC: 6 [13]; HD 2+1; hp 9; AT 1 (claws, quills); THB +2; SA: Flight, Death Spiral; ST 18; MV 12/15/12 (Fly/Climb); XP 2/50.

TIKATREKATIK: The Tikatrekatik (or Treka) is the Path of the Wanderer. These are mystics who follow the ancient energy force known as Acheevak (The Way) and are responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of the tribe. They are consulted on all manner of things important to the Tikatikatik including matings, alliances, and deaths.

Treka try to mediate disputes and internecine conflicts within the tribe and between different tribes. They are believed to possess the gift of prophecy and speak directly to the Great Wanderer. The Tikatrekatik therefore hold a great amount of influence. Treka leadership is typically determined by age and wisdom, with the Head Mystic being the oldest and wisest of them all.

Tikatrekatik Mystic: AC: 6 [13]; HD 1+2; hp 5; AT 1 (claws); THB +1; SA: Flight, Varrulium Shaping, one (1) extra Gift; ST 16; MV 12/15/12 (Fly/Climb); XP 2/50.

TIKATIKACHAK: The Tikatikachak (or K'chak) is the Path of the Worker. They are responsible for expanding and maintaining Hives, preparing and storing food, overseeing the hatcheries, and other daily tasks. They seldom leave the Hive and are in charge of managing the Takta (see below). K'chak leaders tend to be chosen from those with the greatest experience and highest work ethic, with the Keeper of the Hive being the most respected of them all.

Tikatikachak Worker: AC: 6 [13]; HD 2; hp 8; AT 1 (claws); THB +2; SA: Flight, Rock Shaping; ST 18; MV 12/15/12 (Fly/Climb); XP 2/40.

TAK'TEE: The Tak'tee (or K'tee) are Tikatikatik whose wings have been crippled (usually in battle), rendering them incapable of flight. They now serve as the tribe's Guardians. Most Tak'tee were once Atrak warriors. If the Hive is attacked, they throw themselves into battle ahead of the K'chak, hoping to die an honorable death in defense of their people. Only in this manner can they regrow their wings and join the Great Wanderer when he awakens from the Long Sleep.

Tak'tee Guardian: AC: 6 [13]; HD 2+1; hp 9; AT 1 (claws, quills); THB +2; SA: N/A; ST 18; MV 12/12 (Climb); XP 2/50.

TAKTA: The Takta are known as the Pathless. These are usually Tikatikatik prisoners from other tribes who have been captured during raids. The Takta are slaves who perform the most menial tasks. Takta who are willing to renounce their old tribe may eventually become part of the new tribe. A Tikatikatik who has been punished by being stripped of his wings may also be condemned to a lifelong service of Takta, but can never return to his place within the tribe.

Takta Slave: AC: 6 [13]; HD 2; hp 7; AT 1 (claws); THB +1; SA: Flight; ST 18; MV 12/15/12 (Fly/Climb); XP 2/30.

DAILY CYCLES

The Tikatikatik mark the passing of a day in three cycles. These cycles are known as the "wake" cycle, the "hunt" cycle, and the "sleep" cycle. The skies during the wake cycle are light pink. The skies during the hunt cycle are red. During the sleep cycle, they are violet in color.

A Tikatikatik Hive never sleeps. Hreecha families rotate their responsibilities in shifts, giving the Hive a constant bustle of activity. Tikatikatik roaming the skies of Varrul tend to be most active during the "hunt" cycle.

MATING CYCLES

Larger increments of time are measured in mating cycles of approximately one (1) year. These are loose determinations at best, marked by the time the majority of the Hive's females entered estrus.

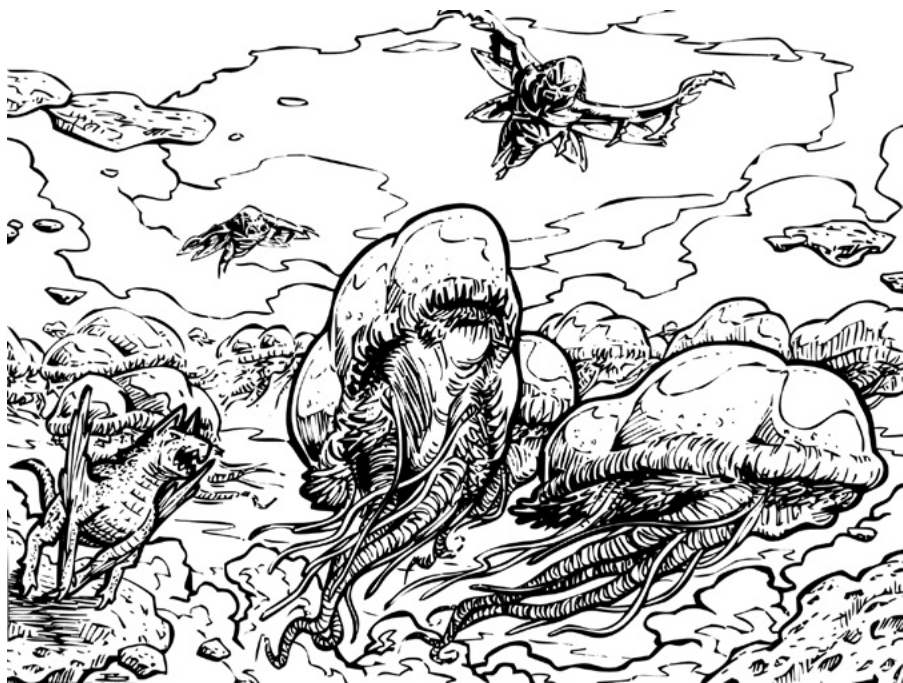
DAYS

The recording of time is tied to the Pipes of Attachin and the Ritual of Wonderment (see below). After the pipes sound and the Great Drum beats, the Mystics return to their Hives and name the previous era, usually after a major event such as the sighting of a comet, victory over a rival tribe, or the visions of a particular Mystic. These eras are known as “Days”.

There is no real consensus between the tribes, so one tribe who was poisoned by toxic gases might name that time period the Days of the Green Death Cloud while another tribe whose people prospered from good hunts may call the same time period the Days of Plenty.

TIMES

The greatest increment of Tikatikatik measurement is known as the “Time”. These are tied to the life of the Great Wanderer. They consist of the Time Before (T’trika) when the Great Wanderer roamed the galaxy, the Time of War (T’trak) when the Great Wanderer was beset on all sides by evil Hroolatt Demons, the current Time of Slumber (T’kees) when the Great Wanderer fell into the Long Sleep, and the Time of Travels (T’chika) when the Great Wanderer will return to once again spread his teachings across the galaxy.



DAILY LIFE

At its heart, Tikatikatik culture is built around hunting and raiding. The tribe comes first, while all non-tribesfolk are considered “others”. The Tikatikatik value courage and have a rough code of honor. Bravery in the face of torture or death is highly respected.

The daily life of a Tikatikatik depends largely upon the Path it follows.

TIKATIKATRAK: Warriors leave the Hive for days at a time, searching the skies for prey. They travel in bands of 4d6 and are constantly on the lookout for the great Hooshar herds. They also protect the Hive from rival tribes and lately from offworld mining interests.

Warriors may also form raiding parties to attack a rival Hive. Captured Tikatikatik are taken as slaves, although enemy warriors may be tortured to death in a variety of creative ways to test their mettle. Those who die well are granted the Release of the Spirit (see below).

TIKATREKATIK: Mystics spend their days lost in meditation, pondering the tribe’s connection with the Great Wanderer. They sometimes accompany hunting parties and raiding parties, offering spiritual guidance and leadership. A few have even led war parties of their own.

TIKATIKACHAK: Workers spend their days toiling away at the Hive. They work to extend or repair tunnels, harvest wild growths, and spice meat to sustain the tribe in times of famine. Workers also chew up and regurgitate meat for hatchlings in the hatcheries. This is one of their most important tasks, as new grubs mean the survival of the entire tribe.

On some occasions, a few Workers may accompany hunting or raiding parties into the skies to help them process and transport large kills or assist with assaults on enemy Hives.

TAK’TEE: Guardians spend their time patrolling the Hive and training for battle. They tend to be taciturn and aloof, but maintain a good relationship with the Hive’s Workers. Guardians often ride Kendree Krabs when on patrol. They have the authority to detain anyone in the Hive, and attack all who resist.

TAKTA: Takta slaves spend their time performing the most menial tasks under the watchful eyes of their K’chak masters. They are only allowed to speak when spoken to and generally live a miserable existence. Takta may sometimes be taken along on hunts or other trips to carry food and clean for the Warriors. Any Takta caught trying to escape is tortured and stripped of its wings before being executed.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

The Tikatikatik live a harsh existence, with most of their time spent hunting, raiding, or tending the needs of their Hives. In their limited free time, they gather together for storytelling, games, and tribal rituals. These gatherings may take place among Hreecha families, the entire tribe, or occasionally in preplanned meetings of allied tribes.

Storytelling involves tales of tribal heroes, tribal fables, and major events in the tribe's history. These stories are often accompanied by serenades of mandible clicks, chants, and wing snaps similar to the haunting song of a Pnerrisian cicada.

Most Tikatikatik games simulate tests of fighting abilities and physical prowess, such as diving through a narrow gap, tunnel races, mock fights, and quill throws. The winner earns respect for himself and his Hreecha.

Tribal rituals are usually held in the Harritch (central vault) before feasts or at other important times (see below). These always include a sermon relevant to the Great Wanderer and his Travels that is given by a Mystic from atop a large deposit of Varrulium which is also known as the Harritch ("Heart").

NAMES

Each Tikatikatik tribe is named after something distinct about its Hive, its people, or its First Ones. Examples include the Storm Raiders, the Blood of the Wyrms, and the Children of Green Quill. This name is passed down for generations and never changes, although it may be lost or disgraced if the tribe is vanquished and/or driven from their Hive.

The Tikatikatik do not name their young at birth. Instead, the youngling is given a name upon its Awakening. This name is usually based on a descriptive feature or quirk (i.e. "Blue Claw" or "Talks Too Fast"). A new name may be acquired later, and is usually related to another quirk, something from the natural world (i.e. "Quiet Hooshar"), or an impressive deed (i.e. "Braves the Storm").

TRIBAL RITUALS

The Tikatikatik are a spiritual people whose lives are filled with daily rituals in which they give thanks to the Great Wanderer and the blessings he provides. Treka mystics oversee the larger rituals with the blessing of the Great Wanderer. A few of the more common rituals are noted below.

AKEETAKTA (RITUAL OF DISGRACE)

This ritual is reserved as punishment for the most disgraceful crimes or loss of honor. It involves a public shaming and stripping of the Tikatikatik's wings. The Tikatikatik is sentenced to a life of shame, serving the Hive as the lowest of all Takta slaves, scorned and shunned by the entire tribe. A Tikatikatik who has suffered the Akeetakta can only be welcomed by the Great Wanderer if one of the tribe's Council grants them permission to die in the service of the tribe (such as defending the Hive from offworlders).

AKITIKA (AWAKENING)

This ritual is the beginning of a young Tikatikatik's adult life. It is marked by the growing of one's wings. A Treka mystic holds a ceremony for the youngling that involves its naming before the eyes of its Hreecha and ends with the youngling taking its first flight.

AVARRACH (RITUAL OF WONDERMENT)

This most sacred ritual is performed to honor the Great Wanderer as the Tikatikatik await his awakening from the Long Sleep. After the Pipes of Attachin sound, Treka mystics travel to the Temple of A'li'tha from all over the planet to await the beat of the Great Drum and witness the majesty of the Guiding Light of Travels Beyond. This process is further detailed in CHAPTER 0014: TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA.

HREECHA'TA (ADOPTION)

This ritual welcomes a Tikatikatik to a Hreecha family unit. It is a quiet ritual that is usually performed by the head of the Hreecha, but a Mystic may be asked to lead it. It involves all members of the Hreecha adding their blood ichor to a freshly killed corpse (preferably a Hooshar killed by a Hreecha Warrior). The family then devours the corpse, joining their blood together and sealing the bond forever.

CHACHEEVARR (RETURN TO THE WANDERER)

This ritual begins with the sounding of the Pipes of Attachin, a flute-like whistle that can be heard everywhere on Varrul. This signals the tribe's Mystics to begin the long and perilous journey to the Temple of A'li'tha, which lies on the planet's Core. There they participate in the Ritual of Wonderment (see above).

CHACHREEVA (RELEASE OF THE SPIRIT)

This ritual marks the (usually peaceful) passing of a Tikatikatik. It is a solemn occasion where the fallen Tikatikatik is wrapped in a loose parachute of Hooshar skin and mourned at the Hive's holy Harritch vault.

Tikatrekatik mystics say a prayer to the Great Wanderer while other Tikatikatik leave offerings of blood, bone, and spirit. The body is then carried into the skies by its Hreecha, to be released into Varrul's swirling winds. The body eventually floats to the planet's Core, to become One with the Great Wanderer.

Tikatikatik who die honorably in battle are assumed to make this journey on their own.

CHUTATAY (ACCEPTANCE)

A Tikatikatik may be allowed to join another tribe. This usually happens during alliances or peace negotiations, where a handful of members of each tribe are chosen to live with and mate with each other. It also occurs after a tribe is driven from their Hive and forced to seek refuge with another. The tribesfolk are usually accepted as Pathless, but may be adopted through Chutatay as full members of the tribe if they bring valuable skills or prove themselves useful.

KUTAR (BLOOD DUEL)

The Kutar is a duel between two willing combatants. It may be planned or happen on the spur of the moment. No formal ceremony is needed—all it takes is a willingness to fight. The winner of the duel may choose to show mercy; the loser is bound by honor to defer to the winner. A Kutatrak (Blood Feud) may occur between Hreecha, if the fight was extremely lopsided (i.e. a renowned Warrior killed a young Worker).

TIKAT (ALLIANCE)

This ritual is held when two tribes agree to forge an alliance. The tribes are bound by their oaths to help each other avoid famine and ward off threats. Alliances are traditionally forged by an exchange of tribesfolk. The new tribesfolk are expected to undertake the Ritual of Chutatay and become full-fledged members of the new tribe. This ritual is becoming more and more common as offworlder incursions decimate the Tikatikatik tribes and threaten their entire way of life.

TOOCHAR (THE GREAT HUNT)

A Great Hunt is called when a herd of Hooshar passes close to a Tikatikatik Hive. The Treka mystics hold a ritual gathering that involves the entire tribe. The next day, Atrak warriors set out in search of the herd while teams of Workers follow close behind, waiting to harvest and prepare the kills.

The Hooshar herds are vital to the tribe's survival. The meat is prepared raw and eaten by the entire tribe, with a portion treated with natural spices to help preserve it for when the hunting is bad. The thick Hooshar skins are used to line the Hive's warrens and nests. The nettles are used as weapons or ornamentation.

TRAKATOK (THE RED QUILL)

This ritual is a call to war among allied tribes. The tribe's War Chief breaks off his longest quill and uses it to deliver the deathblow to an enemy or a powerful animal sacrifice. The larger and more dangerous the creature or foe, the more Warriors are likely to respond to the call. This ritual was once used to spark intertribal warfare, but lately it has been adopted to include war against offworld factions.

VARREECHA (PEACE OF THE WANDERER)

This ritual is a declaration of truce between warring tribes. It usually comes after both tribes have lost a large number of warriors fighting against each other. A Teechak ("Blue Quill") is taken from the back of the host tribe's Head Mystic and given to the visiting tribe as a sign of this truce. A great feast is held (preferably of freshly killed Hooshar) and tribesfolk are exchanged for Acceptance through Chutatay. The peace may be broken later, but usually lasts for at least one mating cycle (year).

WEAPONS AND ARMOR

In combat, Tikatikatik attack with their scythe-like claws. If both claws hit, they may make an additional tusk attack at a -2 penalty.

The Tikatikatik have an unorthodox fighting style that makes use of their abilities and available terrain. When in cramped spaces such as tunnels, the Tikatikatik climb along walls and ceilings, attacking at odd angles for a +1 bonus to Attack Rolls. In the open, they dart about and swoop in to attack, receiving a +1 bonus to Attack Rolls when fighting non-flying creatures.

When in flight, Tikatikatrak warriors are capable of a spinning dive attack that causes 2d6 damage. A variant of this dive attack takes the form of a special Gift known as Ch'katch (the Death Spiral) and can even damage vehicles and starships (see New Gifts, below).

Atrak warriors are also capable of a missile attack by breaking off their own back-quills and hurling them as javelins, using their foreclaws as natural atlats. The Warrior suffers one (1) Hit Point of damage for each quill broken off in this manner, so only the toughest and bravest Atraks utilize this attack. The quills regenerate over time. It is considered taboo to use the quills of another Warrior.

A quill can also be broken into shards and strung with sinew to form a razor-sharp bolo. These bolos are commonly used to capture prey or prisoners alive. Anyone hit by a bolo suffers 1d3 damage and must make a Saving Throw to avoid being entangled and rendered incapable of movement. Entangled creatures may make an Athletics Check to break free of the bolo in one (1) round, suffering 1d3 damage in the process. Otherwise, the bolo can be safely removed in three (3) rounds, if the character takes no other action.

Atrak warriors sometimes make bolos from Hooshar nettles. These inflict 1d6 damage on a successful strike (Saving Throw for 1/2) and entangle the target, as above. In addition, if the Saving Throw fails, the victim is stunned and unable to act for one (1) round. The nettles are ionically charged, so they even affect robots and electronic devices.

Warriors also make electrified whips out of Hooshar nettles. These whips cause 1d6+2 damage (Saving Throw for 1/2). If the Saving Throw fails, the victim is stunned and unable to act for one (1) round. The whips are ionically charged, so they even affect robots and electronic devices.

The Tikatikatik disdain modern weapons and technology, viewing them as evil offworld devices that corrupt the soul and take them farther from the peace of the Great Wanderer. The tendency of these weapons to power down or explode in Varrul's volatile atmosphere also makes them undesirable.

SYMBOLIC MARKINGS

The Tikatikatik (particularly Tikatikatrak warriors) use dyes, symbols, and other markings to show their accomplishments and make themselves appear even more fierce. The following symbols are common to most tribes. Individual war parties may adopt other symbology that has meaning only to them.

BLACK BAND

A quill dyed with a black encircling band means the Tikatikatik has killed an offworld warrior in combat. This stripe only applies to offworlders who are worthy of battle, such as mercenaries, skyranch hands, or soldiers.

BLACK FOOT AND WHITE STRIPES

A foot and shin dyed black means the Tikatikatik has stolen a Kendree Crab from another tribe. A white stripe along the shin is drawn for each additional crab stolen.

CHUHOOTH CRYSTAL

A Chuhoth Crystal from the belly of a Yuhacta Wyrms embedded in the chest carapace of a Treka mystic is the sign of a Tikatikatik who is favored by the Great Wanderer. The crystal enables the wielder to utilize one (1) extra Gift or Meditation of the Treka's choosing. Chuhoth Crystals are rare finds that are reserved for the oldest and wisest Mystics.

HOOSHAR NETTLE SASH

A Warrior or Warriors who locate a Hooshar herd and lead the tribe on a Great Hunt are allowed to wear a sash of Hooshar bull nettles across the chest. The nettles inflict 1 damage to the wearer each day. Anyone struck by the warrior in melee combat must make a Saving Throw to avoid being stunned (see above). The nettles harden and lose their electricity in 1d6 weeks, but the Warrior continues to wear them as a badge of honor.

KILANA BEAST TRESS

A white Kilana beast tress is the mark of the bravest Warriors. It means the Warrior has traveled deep into the beast's lair, tore a tress from its mane, and returned to tell the tale. The tress is impaled upon a quill and draped over the left shoulder.

RED BAND

A quill dyed with a red encircling band means the Tikatikatik has killed an Atrak warrior in combat. Renowned Warriors may have many stripes along one or more quills. The greatest Warriors sometimes alternate red and black bands (see above) along their quills to show off their kills.

TUSK NOTCH

A notch on the tusk means the Tikatikatik has fought a battle in defense of the Hive (against Tikatikatik raiders or offworlders). This notch can only be made if the invaders were driven off.

VARRULIUM TUSK

A tusk coated in Varrulium Dust is a sign that the Tikatikatik has journeyed to the Temple of A'li'tha on a pilgrimage. The tusk is worth 150 ic for the Dust alone, but may be worth more to a collector.

WHITE QUILL WITH RED BANDS

A dyed white quill with five red bands denotes a Tikatikatik who has defeated another in a Kutar Duel.

WHITE SPIRE

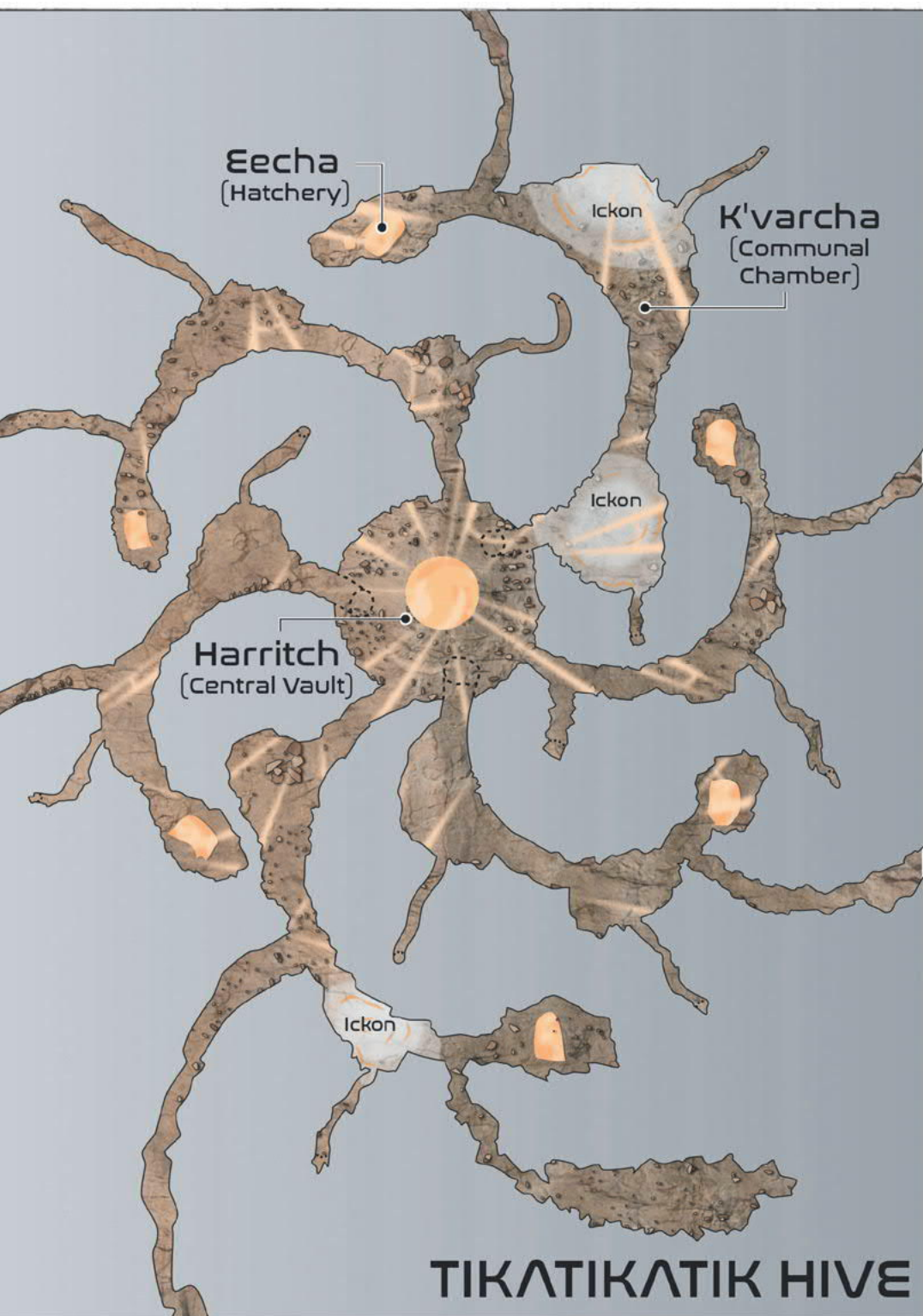
A Tikatikatik with the White Spire (an “inverted V”) painted on its forehead has vowed not to flee or surrender in the coming battle. This vow must be renewed before each battle or raid. If broken, the Tikatikatik suffers the Ritual of Disgrace and is stripped of its wings.

VARRULIUM VEINS

A Tikatikatik Hive is a treasure trove of Varrulium ore. An orb of Varrulium known as the Harritch (“Heart”) hangs in the Hive’s central vault which is also known as the Harritch. The Harritch vault serves as the tribe’s communal and spiritual gathering area. Tendrils of ore stretch like a spiderweb from the Harritch, along the tunnel walls, through the K’varcha communal chambers, and end in large deposits spread throughout the floor of the Eecha hatcheries.

The ore is considered sacred to the Tikatikatik and is symbolic of their connection with the Great Wanderer. It is known as Vocha, which loosely translates to “Blood of the God”.

The veins are shaped by Treka mystics into primitive Vicha (story patterns) that depict major events in the tribe’s history, starting from the time of the Great Wanderer (in the central vault) to the tribe’s ascension into the skies of Varrul and major events since. The phrase Vicha ak Vocha is used to refer to this story as the “Great Spiral of the Tribe”.



A Diplomacy robot or Deep Space Explorer can get a rough idea off the storyline just by studying a story pattern. All other characters must make a Knowledge Check. This is a good way to reveal the history of the Tikatikatik tribe as seen through their eyes. The story patterns are ruined during mining and extraction unless great steps are taken to record and preserve them.

Treka mystics claim they can actually feel the presence of their deity in the ore, and in a way they can—large deposits of Varrulium hum with Acheevak. Any creature who Walks in the Way can attune itself to a specific Varrulium Vein by spending three (3) days in meditation atop the Harritch. This enables the creature to always locate the vein, no matter the distance. It is how Treka mystics are able to make the journey back and forth from the Hive to the Temple of A'li'tha on the planet's Core (CHAPTER 0014: TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA).

HOMING ABILITY

Tikatikatik are in tune with the natural world, particularly the almost imperceptible Acheevak vibrations given off by the Varrulium veins in their Hive. Atrak warriors use these vibrations to find their way back to the Hive from a distance of over thirty (30) miles away. Treka mystics can sense these vibrations over an unlimited distance (see above).

NEW GIFTS

All Tikatikatik are in tune with the mystical energy they call Acheevak (The Way). The following 1st-level Gifts are learned by those who follow certain Paths. Only Mystics may access higher-level Gifts.

A'VEE (ROCK SHAPING)

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

A'vee is practiced solely by Tikatikachak workers. It allows them to reshape the porous rock found floating throughout Varrul's stormy skies in an amount equal to 10 cubic feet per HD. While being Shaped, the rock flows like thick liquid at the Worker's command.

Workers use this Gift mainly to expand and maintain Tikatikatik Hives. However, it can also be used in defense, sealing tunnels to block invaders, opening tunnels for reinforcements, and even enveloping foes in cocoons of solid rock.

A cocooned character is unable to move and suffers 1d6 damage from suffocation each round. The character may make an Athletics Check each round to break free.

CH'KATCH (DEATH SPIRAL)

Range: Self

Duration: Instant

Ch'katch is a spinning dive attack powered by mystical energy that is practiced solely by Tikatikatrak warriors. It turns the Warrior into a whirling, flaming missile that grants a +2 bonus to the Attack Roll and causes 2d6 damage to living beings, 1d3 damage to vehicles, and 1 point of damage to starships.

The Warrior must be able to dive for 240 feet in order to invoke the Death Spiral. Creatures struck by this dive attack must make a Saving Throw or be knocked down. If they are on unstable footing (piloting an open skyskiff, walking on the edge of a docking platform, standing near the cliff of a floating island, etc.), the struck creature is sent plummeting into Varrul's skies.

Tikatikatrak war parties concentrate Ch'katch dives on one vessel at a time. If any of the Warriors roll a natural 20, the vessel's hull is ruptured by the attack, allowing the Tikatikatik to force entry in 1d6 rounds. Once inside, they kill everything in sight. Horrified miners have recounted tales of entire transports plummeting to their doom with a swarm of "Bugs" clinging to its hull.

VOCHA VEE (VARRULIUM SHAPING)

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent

Vocha Vee is practiced solely by Tiktreakatik mystics. It allows them to reshape the sacred Varrulium ore in an amount equal to 100 cubic feet per HD. While being shaped, the ore flows like thick liquid at the Mystic's command.

Mystics use this Gift mainly to create story patterns in the walls of Tikatikatik Hives. This process embeds the ore in the rock, making it difficult to extract. This Gift would be invaluable to offworlders, as it would make the mining process faster and safer.

FIRST CONTACT WITH OFFWORLDERS

According to Tikatikatik lore, the Great Wanderer traveled across the Skies Beyond (outer space) and met with races from a thousand-thousand worlds.

When the first aliens came to Varrul, Tikatikatik of the Falling Star tribe welcomed them into the Hive in the tradition of the Great Wanderer. However, the offworlders betrayed their trust and attempted to remove the tribe's sacred Varrulium. A battle ensued and the offworlders were driven away. (see Kulsta Lormbreakers in CHAPTER 0001: TIMELINE OF EVENTS).

The Falling Star Tikatikatik believed the offworlders would not return. They were wrong. Those who followed continued the same pattern, invading and destroying Hives to mine the sacred Varrulium.

The Tikatikatik have since grown to hate offworlders and attack them on sight. Offworlders in turn view the Tikatikatik as hostile predators and have begun their extermination. Few, if any, would believe the Tikatikatik are actually sentient beings, fully capable of higher thought and emotions.

MEETING THE TIKATIKATIK

At some point, the Referee may decide to reveal that the Tikatikatik are not just savage animal predators. The PCs might witness a Tikatikatik tribal ritual, they might discover Tikatikatik story patterns on a piece of Varrulium, or a character who Walks in the Way might sense the underlying thoughts and emotions of a tribal Mystic. This should lead the PCs to question the morality of practices such as “Bug Hunts”, mass extermination, and the destruction of the Hives, if they have not done so already.

RUNNING A TIKATIKATIK CAMPAIGN

The Referee may decide to flip the script and run a game entirely from the Tikatikatik perspective. The PCs are part of a Hreecha family, most likely Warriors and Mystics since Workers seldom leave the Hive. They can launch raids against offworlders and rival Tikatikatik tribes, with success elevating their own status. They may even aspire to become tribal leaders.

The game can even be set in a different time period, perhaps before the first offworlders came to the planet. This gives the PCs a chance to see firsthand how destructive the Varrulium trade has been to Varrul.

LEXICON OF TIKTIKATIK TERMS

The Tikatikatik language is a combination of mandible clicks, throat chirps, wing flutters, and sign language that is difficult to translate into Galactic Standard. It should be noted that the Tikatikatik cannot produce the letter “V” with their mandibles—all “V” sounds are created by swiping two foreclaws together.

TIKATIKATIK TO GALACTIC STANDARD

The following terms are translated from Tikatikatik to Galactic Standard.

- A’chatrak (War Chief)
- A’veen (Rock Shaping)
- Acheevak (The Way)
- Akeetakta (Ritual of Disgrace)
- Akitika (Ritual of Awakening)
- Atrak (Path of the Warrior)
- Avarrach (Ritual of Wonderment)
- Ch’katch (Death Spiral)
- Chacheevarr (Return to the Wanderer)
- Chachreeva (Release of the Spirit)

- Chak (Path)
- Chee (Power)
- Chee'havarr (Chosen One)
- Chutatay (Ritual of Acceptance)
- Eecha (Egg Chamber)
- Hachaka (Hardening)
- Harritch (Heart or Center)
- Hreecha (Family)
- Hreecha'ta (Ritual of Adoption)
- Hreechakta (Tribeless)
- Hroolatt (Demons)
- K'chak (Path of the Worker)
- K'tee (Guardians of the Hive)
- K'varcha (Communal Chamber)
- Kutar (Blood Duel)
- Kutatrak (Blood Feud)
- T'chika (Time of Travels)
- T'kees (Time of Slumber)
- T'trak (Time of War)
- T'trika (Time Before)
- Tak'tee (Guardians of the Hive)
- Takta (Pathless)
- Teechak (Blue Quill)
- Teeku (Keeper of the Hive).
- Tikat (Alliance)
- Tikatikachak (Path of the Worker)
- Tikatikatik (The People)
- Tikatikatrak (Path of the Warrior)
- Tikatrekatik (Path of the Wanderer)
- Toochar (The Great Hunt)
- Trakatok (The Red Quill)
- Treka (Path of the Wanderer)
- V'chee (Head Mystic)
- Vareecha (Peace of the Wanderer)
- Varrichik (The Great Wanderer)
- Vicha (Story Pattern)
- Vicha ak Vocha (Great Spiral of the Tribe)
- Vocha (Varrulium)
- Vocha Vee (Varrulium Shaping)

GALACTIC STANDARD TO TIKATIKATIK

The following terms are translated from Galactic Standard to Tikatikatik

HIVE

- Communal Chamber (K'varcha)
- Egg Chamber (Eecha)
- Great Spiral of the Tribe (Vicha ak Vocho)
- Heart or Center (Harritch)
- Story Pattern (Vicha)
- Varrulium (Vocho)

TRIBAL COUNCIL

- Head Mystic (V'chee)
- Keeper of the Hive (Teeku)
- War Chief (A'chatrak)

SOCIETY

- Family (Hreecha)
- Guardians of the Hive (Tak'tee or K'tee)
- Hardening (Hachaka)
- Path (Chak)



- Path of the Wanderer (Tikatrekatik or Treka)
- Path of the Warrior (Tikatikatrak or Atrak)
- Path of the Worker (Tikatikachak or K'chak)
- Pathless (Takta)
- The People (Tikatikatik)
- Tribeless (Hreechakta)

RITUALS

- Alliance (Tikat)
- Blood Duel (Kutar)
- Blood Feud (Kutatrak)
- Blue Quill (Teechak)
- Peace of the Wanderer (Vareecha)
- Release of the Spirit (Chachreeva)
- Return to the Wanderer (Chacheevarr)
- Ritual of Acceptance (Chutatay)
- Ritual of Adoption (Hreecha'ta)
- Ritual of Awakening (Akitika)
- Ritual of Disgrace (Akeetakta)
- Ritual of Wonderment (Avarrach)
- The Great Hunt (Toochar)
- The Red Quill (Trakatok)

SPIRIT WORSHIP

- Chosen One (Chee'havarr)
- Demons (Hroolatt)
- Power (Chee)
- The Great Wanderer (Varrichik)
- The Way (Acheevak)

GIFTS

- Death Spiral (Ch'katch)
- Rock Shaping (A'vee)
- Varrulium Shaping (Vocha Vee)

TIMES

- Time Before (T'trika)
- Time of War (T'trak)
- Time of Slumber (T'kees)
- Time of Travels (T'chika)



CHAPTER

0013

THE CORE

The Core is an enormous, planet-sized mass of porous rock that lies at the center of Varrul. This rock is rich in Varrulium ore and other valuable minerals. The Core appears to be the source of all the toxic gases, violent storms, and magnetic fluctuations that rock the planet's turbulent skies. That is because the Core is much more than it seems.

BREATH OF THE WANDERER

A thick cloud of violent plasma storms roil between the Middle Atmosphere and the Lower Atmosphere. This storm is battered by invisible magnetic waves, slowing Movement to a crawl. The Tikatikatik call this barrier the Breath of the Wanderer.

It takes three (3) turns to navigate the turbulent storm in either direction.

PLASMA EFFECTS

Creatures and vehicles tend to be smaller and more maneuverable than starships in Varrul's atmosphere, giving them a greater chance to avoid the superheated plasma rains.

A starship caught in the storm automatically takes 1d3 damage per round for thirty (30) rounds.

A vehicle pilot may make a Navigation Check each turn to "ride the storm" and avoid taking 1d3 damage per round for ten (10) rounds (one turn) from the superheated plasma rains. Three successful Checks are needed to avoid damage.

Flying creatures can better navigate the storm so long as they keep a watchful eye and avoid the worst pockets of superheated plasma rains. This requires a Survival Check each turn to “ride the storm” and avoid taking 1d6 damage per round for ten (10) rounds (one turn). Flying creatures native to Varrul or familiar with Varrul’s atmosphere receive a +2 bonus to the Check.

IONIC EFFECTS

Starship pilots and vehicle operators must also make a Saving Throw each turn to avoid the dangerous ion strikes that accompany this storm. Three (3) Saving Throws are required to avoid these strikes. Otherwise, the vessel is struck by ionic lightning, frying all ship’s systems, including weapons and shields.

Vessels equipped with the Redundant Systems Modification may bring their backup systems online with a Technology Check to avoid crash landing on the surface of the Core.

SKIES ABOVE THE CORE

The skies beneath the Breath of the Wanderer surround the Core and make up the Lower Atmosphere of Varrul. The air here is surprisingly breathable, but still ultimately poisonous to most non-native lifeforms, causing weakness and death over the course of several months unless the exposure is treated.

Ion strikes and plasma storms are less common than in the Middle Atmosphere, but tend to be more intense. There is a 1 in 10 chance per hour that a Plasma Storm gathers around a flying vessel or mining operation on the surface of the Core (1 in 10 per day if an Energy Damper is used).

A few hundred floating islands circle the skies of the Lower Atmosphere, orbiting the Core in a roughly spiral pattern. These are chunks of the Core’s surface which were dislodged by Magnetic Eruptions (see below) and hurled into the sky. Over time, these islands eventually rise up into the Middle Atmosphere.

SURFACE OF THE CORE

The surface of the Core is a barren expanse of gray rocky hills, narrow canyons, and steep mountain spires. The terrain is pockmarked from superheated plasma rains and lightning strikes. The blasted landscape glitters with Varrulium Dust and Varrulium Nuggets.

EARTHQUAKES

Earthquakes frequently rock the Core. These quakes range in severity, causing regular rock slides, cavern collapses, gaping fissures in the earth, and even mountains to crumble. A few of the more forceful quakes are strong enough to cause Magnetic Eruptions.

MAGNETIC ERUPTIONS

A Magnetic Eruption is a powerful blast of magnetic and electrical energy caused by major Earthquakes that ripple through the Core. These eruptions are centered around large deposits of Varrulium and other magnetic ores.

A magnetic eruption propels large chunks of the Core into the skies above. These chunks are carried along invisible magnetic tides to become floating islands in the Lower Atmosphere and eventually rise up into the Middle Atmosphere.

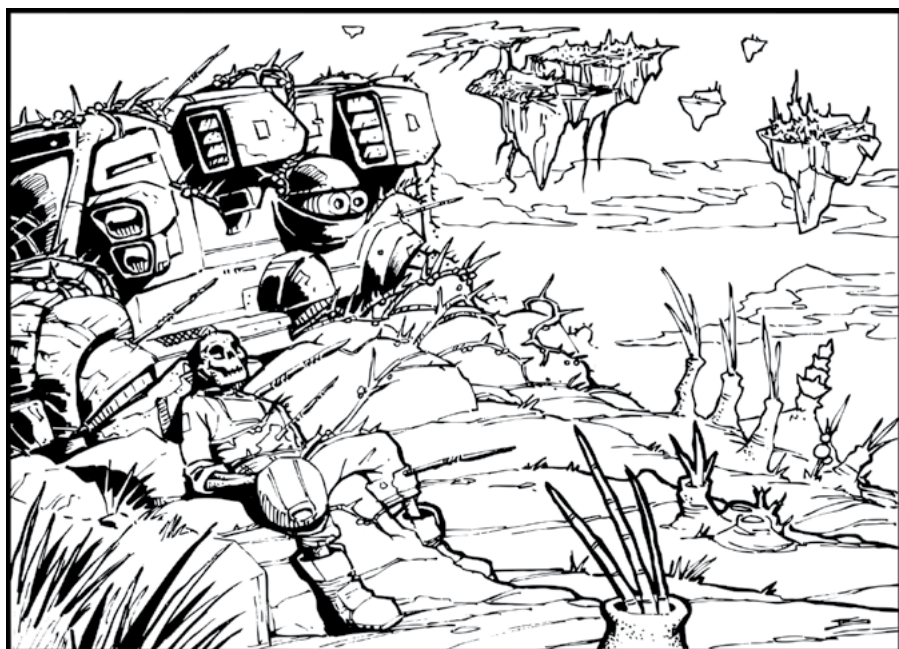
FLORA AND FAUNA

A thriving cave ecosystem exists beneath the Core's surface, mostly dependent on the Ickon and plasma gas mixtures that settle into pools after a good storm. The caves are populated with typical flora and fauna native to Varrul, however, the Referee is free to surprise the PCs with new wildlife, as needed.

GROUNDING TRIBES

Countless Tikatikatik tribes dwell in mountain caves across the surface of the Core. These caves are lined with Varrulium ore, but the tunnels lack the refined spiral pattern of the Hives floating through the skies above.

The Grounded Tribes are fiercely territorial, fighting with one another over game and other resources. The majority of the tribe is composed of Warriors,



with only a few Workers, and even fewer Mystics. The Grounded Tribes are cannibals who tend to be even more savage than the Tikatikatik who dwell in the Skies Above.

The Grounded Tribes are not allowed to fly and are not considered true Tikatikatik until their mountain spires break free of the Core during a Magnetic Eruption and are propelled into the skies of Varrul. This is known as the Chitakka (Small Wandering) and is believed to represent the blessing of the Great Wanderer.

Chitakka was once a rare occurrence, that was cause for great celebration, where Mystics from other tribes visited the newly arisen tribe to learn its name and meet its First Ones. Recently, however, the Earthquakes and Magnetic Eruptions that commence the Small Wandering have become more common.

DERELICT WRECKAGE

Derelict Wreckage is found along the surface of the Core. It consists of wrecked ships, lifepods, and mining equipment that has fallen from the skies above. It is possible that some offworlders survived the crash and now eke out a living in caves beneath the Core, but no survivors have ever been recovered from this wreckage (since no offworlder has ever returned from the surface of the Core).

TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA (PR. AH-LEE-THAH)

The Temple of A'li'tha is the most sacred Tikatikatik site on planet Varrul. It is a tall spire, carved directly from stone that is inhabited only during the sacred Ritual of Wonderment (see below). It is taboo for any of the Grounded Tribes to set foot inside the Temple. The Temple of A'li'tha is detailed further in CHAPTER 0014: TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS (THE CORE)

The surface of the Core provides plenty of opportunities for adventure. The PCs should be at least 5th-level or higher before they attempt to reach the Core.

1. DERELICT TRANSPORT: The characters encounter the wreck of a Colstoen Tech light transport. Inside the cargo hold is a war robot (warbot) prototype that was designed to withstand Varrul's harsh environment. The warbot resembles a large eight-wheeled earthroller. Unique bioorganic circuitry makes it immune to ionic effects and its hull is shielded to resist plasma rains.

Colstoen Tech researchers were taking the warbot out for testing when the transport was struck by ionic lightning and plummeted down to the Core. The warbot activates when anyone without proper clearance enters the cargo hold. It pursues and attacks all living things in sight, seeking shelter and powering down once they are dead.

If the warbot can be disabled, the characters may be able to reprogram it. Colstoen Tech would also be willing to purchase the warbot for 50,000 ic to keep the technology from falling into rival hands.

CTV-Prototype Model I Warbot: AC 6 [13]; hp 30; EXD 3d6; PP +5; RED 6; MV 18; TAR +2; AT Light Rayblaster Turret x2 (2d6), Rollover (1d6 or 3d6); MOD Metal Body, Scanners, Self-Repair, Immune to Ion Effects, Heat Shielding, Vehicle Combat Creature, XP 8/800.

2. EARTHQUAKE: The ground begins to shake, knocking everyone off their feet. A fissure opens up nearby. One character chosen at random must make a Saving Throw. Failure means he plummets into the fissure and lands on a ledge far below, suffering 3d6 damage. If the character survives, the PCs must conduct a rescue with whatever tools they have available.

3. FORGOTTEN CRYSTAL: The characters see the gleam of blue crystal lying buried in the rocks. If they dig it out, they uncover a damaged crystaltech Escape Crystal (see Vault of the Rulloth in CHAPTER 0014: TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA).

The crystal's propulsion system is inoperable and cannot be repaired. A character who Walks in the Way can activate a recording showing a holographic projection of the Temple of A'li'tha as it blasts forth the Guiding Light of Travels Beyond (see Guiding Light of Travels Beyond in CHAPTER 0014: TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA).

Activating this projection immediately attracts the attention of Oolorah the Ancient One, who begins sending dreams and visions to the character in an effort to guide him to the Vault of the Rulloth (see Oolorah the Ancient One in CHAPTER 0014: TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA).

4. GREAT YUHACTA: The characters encounter the fossilized corpse of an enormous Yuhacta Wyrms and at first mistake it for a collection of hills. The corpse is riddled with caves that are home to Broosts, Kendree Krabs, and Salima Eels. Three (3) Chuhoth Crystals can be recovered from the caves in the area of its cavernous stomach. The Grounded Tikatikatik avoid the caves for fear of waking the Wyrms, making it ideal for use as a base of operations.

5. HAMPLO STATION WRECK: The characters come across the enormous wreckage of Hamplo Station, which was downed months ago during a violent plasma storm at the start of the Varrulium Rush (see CHAPTER 0001: TIMELINE OF EVENTS). The station has become home to Varrulian wildlife—Dirch Dogs lurk in the lower parts of the wreckage, Kendree Krabs nest in the upper hull, and Salima Eels wriggle through its ruined halls.

The PCs should be able to recover enough spare parts from the wreckage to make any repairs to their own ship. The Referee can introduce other hooks as needed—one of the PCs may have had a friend or relative aboard the station, perhaps survivors are discovered sleeping in emergency stasis pods, or perhaps there is some corporate data to mine.

6. KILANA BEAST PACK: The characters encounter a herd of six (6) Kilana Beasts consisting of an adult male, an adult female, and four young, as they roam the rocky hills, nibbling on red Rya grass and other sparse vegetation. The young beasts stop to play in a pool of glittering Ickon.

This is unheard of in the skies of Varrul where the creatures are normally encountered alone and in a cave. Kilana Beasts are actually docile herd animals who prefer the company of their own kind. Their isolation in the skies above as well as constant harassment by Tikatikatrak warriors causes them to sink into angry depression.

This is a good way to show the PCs that not everything on Varrul is as it seems.

Kilana Beast Adult (2): AC 0 [19] (natural); HD 8; hp 44; AT 1 (Breath) or 7 (Gore (2d6), Claw x2 (2d6), Claw x4 (1d6); THB +8; SA Plasma Breath (3d6), Vehicle Combat Creature; ST 11; MV 12; XP 8/800.

Kilana Beast Young (4): AC 0 [19] (natural); HD 4; hp 22; AT 1 (Breath) or 7 (Gore (1d6), Claw x2 (1d6), Claw x4 (1d3); THB +4; SA Plasma Breath (1d6+2); ST 15; MV 12; XP 4/120.

7. MAGNETIC ERUPTION: The ground begins to shake, knocking everyone off their feet. A chunk of rock measuring approximately one (1) mile in diameter breaks free from the ground and is propelled one hundred (100) feet into the air. Each PC must make a Saving Throw to avoid being carried away on the newly launched floating island.

The island slowly drifts approximately 100 feet off the ground. If the party was split, they must find some way to reunite with whatever tools they have available. The island passes between two tall hills a day later, so daring PCs may make an Athletics Check to jump onto the hills. Failure means the character suffers 3d6 damage from the fall.

8. TIKATIKATIK SWARM: A swarm of 3d6 Grounded Tikatikatik are seen on a hunt. The PCs see them ambush two Tikatikatik from a rival tribe and eat the fallen corpses. The characters must make a Survival Check to remain undetected. Otherwise, the Grounded Tikatikatik attack on sight, retreating if they lose more than half (1/2) their number. They likely return with reinforcements, so the characters would be wise to relocate.

Grounded Tikatikatik (3d6): AC 6 [13] (natural); HD 2+1; hp 9; AT 1 (claws, quills); THB +2; SA N/A; ST 18; MV 12/12 (Climb); XP 2/20.

9. SAVAGE WRECK: The PCs encounter the wreck of a Brabo-Tow Inc. Mining Junker half-buried in the rock. The ship was damaged in a plasma storm and crashed on the Core after passing through the Breath of the Wanderer. The wrecked ship contains nothing of value.

Most of its crewmembers were killed on impact, but some managed to survive and have been living inside the wreckage ever since. Plasma storms, Grounded Tikatikatik attacks, starvation, V-poisoning, and no hope of rescue have driven the crewmembers insane. They attack on sight and cannot be reasoned with, unless the Referee wants to introduce some roleplaying.

Savage Crewmembers (14): AC 7 [12] (piecemeal armor); HD 1; hp 5; AT 1 (weapon); THB +2; SA Immune to Mind-Influencing effects; ST 18; MV 15; XP 1/20; faulty breathing masks, ripped exposure suits, makeshift melee weapons (spiked clubs, fabriglass axes, jagged metal daggers, etc.)

10. TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA: The characters see the tall spire of the Temple of A'li'tha and the smaller ring of spires known as the Pipes of Attachin in the distance. If the Referee is ready to explore that aspect of Varrul's past, the Pipes of Attachin can sound, attracting Tikatrekatik mystics from all over the planet to participate in the Ritual of Wonderment. Otherwise, the hill the PCs are on is suddenly flung into the sky by a Magnetic Eruption that carries it far away, to another part of the Core.





CHAPTER 0014 TEMPLE OF A'LI'THA

The sacred Temple of A'li'tha consists of a single chamber, with a stone walkway that hugs the interior walls in a spiral pattern from the opening at the top down to the temple floor. The walls and floors are streaked with veins of Varrulium. Tikatikatik mystics have inscribed the ore with story patterns depicting the Great Wanderer's travels and his descent into the Long Sleep.

An enormous shaft in the temple floor leads straight down into impenetrable darkness. The Tikatikatik call this shaft the Acheevak Gate and believe it is a portal to the World Beyond where the Great Wanderer slumbers. It is considered taboo for anyone to enter the shaft.

The "temple" is much more than it seems. It was designed ages ago by the Rulloth people to contain a cosmic threat (see below). It has been adopted into Tikatikatik religious mythology and now serves as their holiest of holy sites on Planet Varrul.

PIPES OF ATTACHIN

The tall fluted spires rising up in a circle around the Temple of A'li'tha are known as the Pipes of Attachin. According to Tikatiktik Mystics, the Pipes emit a sacred whistle that bellows forth from the Temple of A'li'tha to herald the beat of the Great Drum of the Wanderer. The sound of the Pipes can be heard across the entire planet and is a signal for Treka mystics to make the Chacheevak journey to the Temple for the Ritual of Wonderment.

It takes approximately 1d6 days for the Mystics to navigate the skies of Varrul and reach the Temple. Once there, they huddle on the temple floor in a spiral pattern and begin a long, chattering chant, punctuated by a strike of their foreclaws against the stone. On the surface of the Core, the Grounded

Tribes turn out en masse, surrounding the Pipes and joining in the chant, awaiting the sound of the Great Drum and the majesty of the Guiding Light of Travels Beyond.

GREAT DRUM OF THE WANDERER

The Great Drum of the Wanderer is a deafening sonic boom that emanates from deep within the planet's Core. It starts as a spiritual tension that can be felt within the Temple (and in The Way) after the Pipes of Attachin have sounded. When the tension lifts, the Treka mystics holding vigil within the Temple quickly fly up into the air and begin circling the spire, barely outrunning the Guiding Light of Travels Beyond.

GUIDING LIGHT OF TRAVELS BEYOND

The Guiding Light of Travels Beyond is an incredible beam of raw energy that crackles forth from the Temple of A'li'tha approximately one (1) week after the Pipes of Attachin sound. The blast of energy explodes from the Acheevak Gate (see below), fires up the spire, into the skies of Varrul, and continues out to the very edge of the Rul System, destroying everything unlucky enough to be caught in its path.

This event once happened every century—it now happens every few years. No offworlder has yet witnessed this breathtaking display, but the time is soon coming. The Tikatikatik believe the Guiding Light illuminates the path that the Great Wander will take into the Skies Beyond after his awakening from the Long Sleep. The truth is much darker. . .

TRUE HISTORY OF VARRUL

The true history of Varrul is a tragic tale, much of which has been lost or distorted over time. The story begins with the Rul System, which was once inhabited by a spacefaring race known as the Rulloth.

The Rulloth homeworld of Rul was a place of peace and learning where mystics gathered in crystalline towers to explore the mysteries of the cosmos and study the ancient art of Arhala (The Way). The four other inhabited planets of the Rul System were likewise very strong in this mystical energy. The Rul Nebula served as a barrier that protected the reclusive Rulloth from unwanted visitors.

THE COMING OF VARR

Millenia ago, the Rul System was attacked by a cosmic entity the Rulloth named Varr, which means "Destroyer" in their language.

The wisest Rulloth mystics had already foreseen Varr's coming and knew they could not destroy a being of such immense destructive power. Instead, they devised a method to place it into a dormant state.

QUIETING THE GREAT DRUM

The Great Drum of the Wanderer is actually a reference to the massive organ that serves as Varr's heart. Each beat of this alien heart sends a pulse of energy through Varr's body, powering its instinct and motor functions. The Rulloth theorized that if they could slow down this process and disperse the energy generated by each heartbeat, they could force Varr into an unnatural slumber.

As Varr descended on the Rul System, a brave team of Rulloth mystics landed a crystal starship on its carapace and bored into its shell until they reached the heart organ. Attuning themselves to the monster's lifeforce, these Rulloth focused their Arhala on slowing down the beat of its heart. The process was painstakingly slow and took weeks to accomplish. Millions of Rulloth died during this time as their once-beautiful worlds were torn asunder.

At last, the mystics succeeded, and the Great Destroyer slumbered. It curled itself into a protective ball and began its orbit in the space around the Rul Sun. The remains of the inhabited worlds became the Rul Asteroid Cluster which, along with the Rul Nebula, served to hide the great monster from those who might awaken it for their own nefarious purposes.

FORMATION OF VARRUL

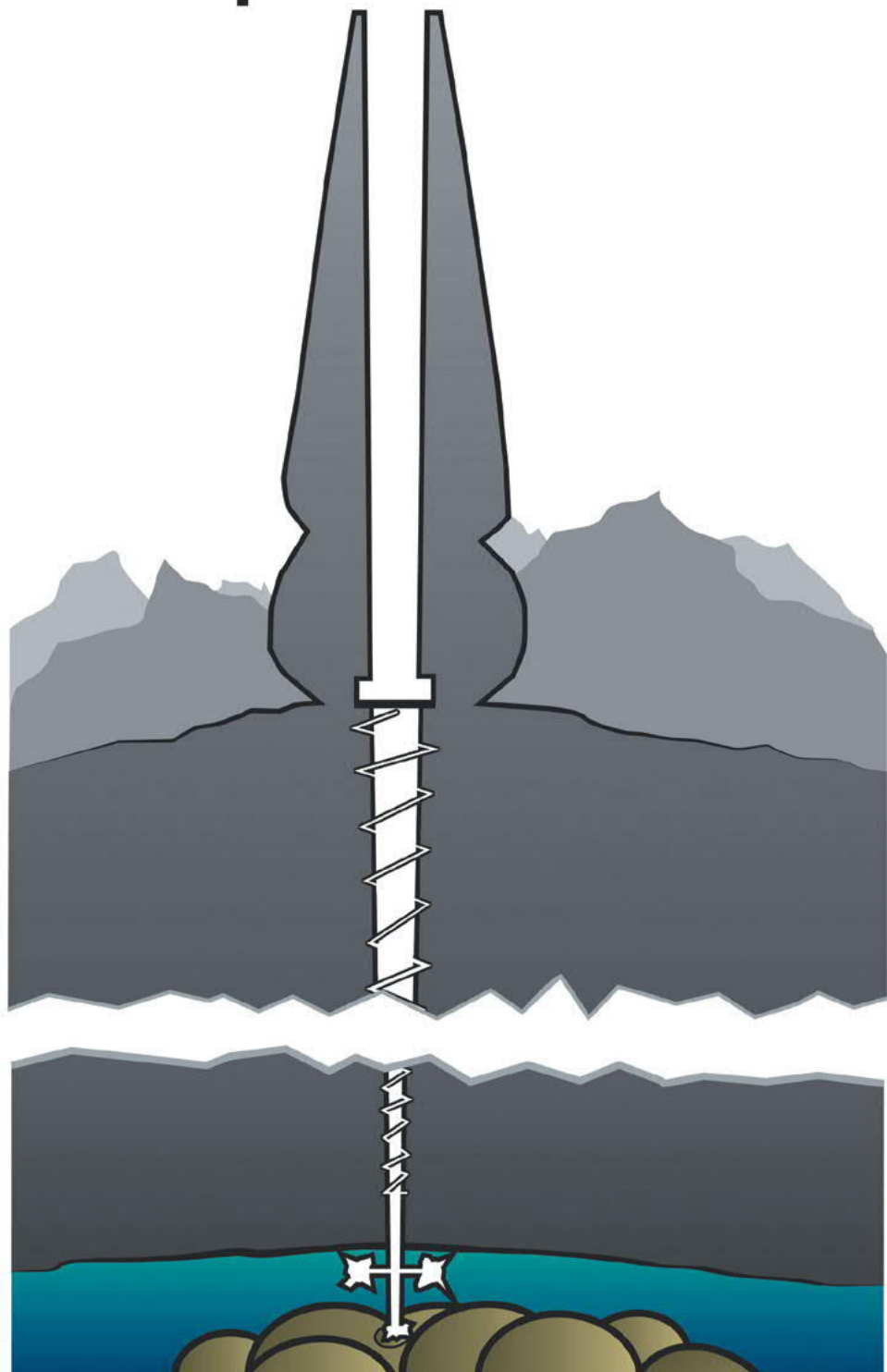
Over time, Varr's body began secreting sticky enzymes that eventually hardened into a protective cocoon. This cocoon is better known as the planet's Core, from which all of Varrul's ionic activity, poison gases, and magnetic fluctuations originates. Gaseous emissions from Varr's sleeping form leaked out of this cocoon and eventually became the gas giant the Rulloth named Varrul. The energy siphoned off by the planet's ionic surges and ionic lightning strikes actually fuels Varr as it sleeps.

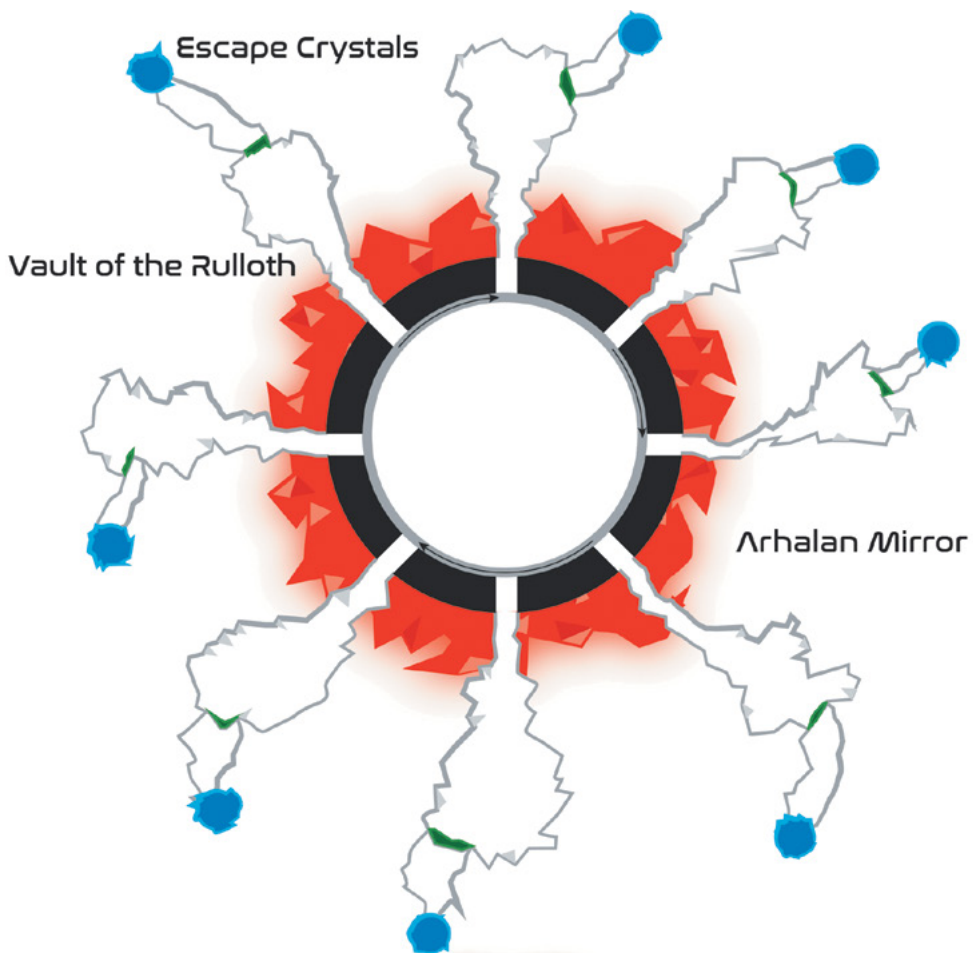
The Rulloth salvaged what little they could of their ruined civilization, but their lifeforce was tied to their shattered homeworld. They knew that even their long-lived race was doomed, but the surviving Rulloth swore an oath to remain behind and keep Varr asleep until a way could be found to destroy the monster for good. This oath became known as The Vigil.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

The Rulloth built the spire, now known as the Temple of A'li'tha, to help focus their efforts. A chamber hidden deep beneath the Temple contains special Arhalan crystals that help absorb the energy from each beat of Varr's massive heart. The tall spire channels and disperses this energy into space. If this process should ever be disrupted, the Destroyer of Rul will once again awaken and resume its destructive path.

Temple of A'li'tha





THE RISE OF THE TIKATIKATIK

While awake, the cosmic entity known as Varr traveled across the remote reaches of the universe, devouring countless planets and leaving ruin in its path. Many plants and primitive lifeforms survived by clinging to Varr's enormous body, eking out a symbiotic (sometimes parasitic) existence as the monster traveled across time and space. Driven by insatiable hunger, Varr neither knew nor cared of their presence—they were like fleas on the back of a Vasterian Haldog.

Ages after Varr was forced into slumber, one of these races began to show signs of sentience. These were the primitive ancestors of the insectile Tikatikatik. Some of these insectoids even demonstrated the potential to commune with Arhala. Rulloth mystics welcomed this change. They began to teach the Tikatikatik, hoping to enlist their help in keeping Varr dormant.

As the Tikatikatik evolved and became more versed in Arhala, they sensed the power of Varr deep within the Core and mistook it for a god. They began to see the Rulloth as evil oppressors who sought only to harness this ancient god's power for themselves.

The Tikatikatik schemed and plotted in secret, and eventually rose up in rebellion, attacking the Rulloth and driving them from the great Temple of A'li'tha. The few surviving Rulloth were forced to take shelter in the hidden vaults beneath the Temple where the Tikatikatik feared to venture.

The Tikatikatik began the worship of Varr who they named Varrichik (The Great Wanderer). Their mythology around his travels expanded as their awareness grew, and their current culture evolved over centuries. They eventually took to roaming the skies of Varrul, believing that one day, the Great Wanderer would return to lead them into the Skies Beyond (outer space).

The only way the PCs can learn the true history of Varrul is by journeying into the Vault of the Rulloth (see below).

ACHEEVAK GATE

The large shaft in the center of the Temple floor is known as the Acheevak Gate. It extends straight down for many miles, passing through the Vault of the Rulloth, and ending in Chamber of the Heart.

The shaft's walls are blackened and charred from previous blasts of Guiding Light. A stone ramp encircles the outside of the shaft, extending down in a spiral pattern. The ramp turns to clear crystal in the Vault of the Rulloth and red crystal in the Chamber of the Heart. The ramp acts as "rifling" that helps propel Varr's energy into space. It can also be used by flightless PCs to travel up and down the length of the shaft.

POISON BARRIER

The lower depths of the shaft are filled with a thick haze of poison gases that are toxic to most lifeforms, including the Tikatikatik and other native creatures of Varrul. The poison cloud is held in place by Arhalan magic and is used to keep the Tikatikatik away from the last refuge of the Rulloth.

VAULT OF THE RULLOTH

These white crystalline cave formations were the refuge of the last Rulloth mystics. Rulloth technology utilized an arcane form of crystaltech that harnessed the mystical energy of The Way. The Vault of the Rulloth is filled with that energy.

The caves are charred and blackened from Varr's energy emissions, except for large green crystalline mirrors embedded in the walls (see Arhalan Mirrors, below).

Meditations and Gifts are greatly enhanced by the proximity to Varr's power. While in the Vault of the Rulloth, any character who Walks in the Way is capable of preparing ten times (x10) the normal number of Meditations or Gifts per level, and their effects (duration, # of creatures affected, etc.) are magnified tenfold.

ARHALAN MIRRORS

These emerald green crystal mirrors are spiritual recording devices that store tiny pieces of a Rulloth's spirit, including their memories, dreams, and aspirations. They are activated by touch.

The mirrors reveal the true history of the Rulloth, from the coming of Varr to the betrayal of the Tikatikatik to the slow passing of the last remaining Rulloth mystics sworn to the Vigil. Most importantly, they show what happens when the Pipes of Attachin sound, the Great Drum beats, and the Guiding Light of the Wanderer crackles into the sky.

This should give the PCs a clear indication of what happens with each beat of Varr's enormous heart. In particular, the characters should realize that the energy emission fills the entire Vault of the Rulloth, so anyone caught in the crystal caverns after the Great Drum of the Wanderer sounds is unlikely to survive.

A character who is blind to The Way can only watch the images play out on the crystal mirrors and cannot interact with the spirits inside.

A character who Walks in the Way may interact with the spirits on a limited basis. The PC is surrounded by ghostly images that only he or she can see. These depict various scenes of Rulloth life and culture, including their epic battle with Varr, and the sacred Vigil they swore to uphold.

The PC may ask questions of these spirits, which are answered to the best of their ability. The character gets a clear sense of the dread and despair experienced by the Rulloth who swore to uphold the Vigil—for all their power, they were unable to find a way to destroy the monstrous Varr.

Ooloorah the Ancient One (see below) reveals himself to any character that activates the Arhalan Mirrors.

ESCAPE CRYSTALS

These blue crystal chambers are hidden behind the Arhalan Mirrors. They are actually crystalline lifepods designed as a last-ditch effort to propel any remaining Rulloth to safety if Varr began to awaken. They can also be used to track and follow the monster along its destructive path.

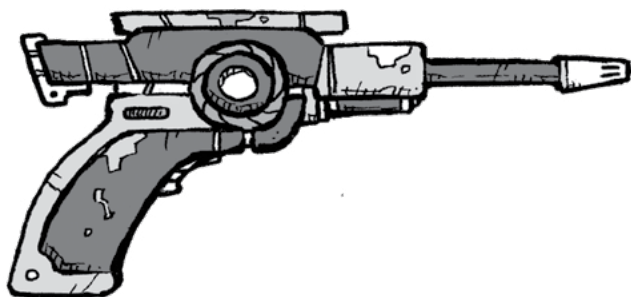
When activated, the crystalline pods expand to accommodate up to six (6) lifeforms. The diamond-hard pods then blast their way through the Core and launch themselves into the skies above. The Escape Crystals have the equivalent of FTL capability and minimal guidance systems, but these can only be accessed by those who Walk in the Way. They are immune to the ionic effects of Varrul's atmosphere and are bound to Varr's lifeforce, enabling the occupants to track the monster as it moves through space.

Escape Crystal: Starship; AC 3 [16]; hp 60; SS 0; TAR +0; AT N/A; MOD Bound to Varr's Lifeforce, FTL Drive (Equivalent); MV 6.

CHAMBER OF THE HEART

This red crystalline chamber lies inside Varr's massive body—its rubbery floor is actually the surface of the alien organ that serves as Varr's heart!

A ring of eight (8) crystal staves the colors of the rainbow are embedded in the soft floor of the heart. These ancient artifacts are known as the Crystal Staves of Stra'thi'hoool. The staves are used to focus one's Arhala, absorb the energy from Varr's heartbeat, and channel it up through the Temple of A'li'tha. The staves cannot be removed from Varr's heart by normal means.



OOLOORAH THE ANCIENT ONE

The Rulloth were an ancient race of tall, luminous beings that existed in the physical and spiritual realm at the same time. Their mystics were well versed in The Way, which they called Arhala, and it is said the strongest could live for millions of years.

Ooloorah is a venerable Rulloth, very likely the last of his kind. His form is bathed in warm light. His long, doglike face is wizened, with sad eyes and a drooping mustache. He moves slowly, and has an air of stateliness about him.

Ooloorah is a fount of knowledge who offers to teach those who Walk in the Way the hidden mysteries of Arhala. Although his intentions are good, Ooloorah has given into fear and despair. His ultimate goal is to convince one of the PCs to take up the Vigil—and he won't accept “no” for an answer.

Ooloorah the Ancient One (10th-level Arhalan Mystic): AC: 9 [10]*; HD 10; hp 55; AT 1 (weapon); BHB +5; SA: Str 15, Knowledge 5, Technology 5, Medicine 5, Navigation 5, Luminous, Gifts (5/4/3), Meditations (3/3/3/3/3); ST 6; MV 12; XP 8/800.

*Ooloorah becomes Luminous if attacked. In this form, he is immune to physical attacks.



CHAPTER 0015

VARR, THE GREAT WANDERER, THE DESTROYER OF RUL

Varr is an implacable cosmic entity that has existed since the beginning of time. In ages past, it was known by many names, including the World Breaker, the Doombringer, and the Devourer of Worlds. Varr is the word for Destroyer in the Rulloth language—the word “Varrul” literally means “Destroyer of Rul”.

Varr resembles an enormous Targatian millipede, but on a planetary scale. Its body is over ten thousand (10,000) miles long and one thousand (1,000) miles in diameter. Its back is covered by a hard, segmented carapace with an insectile head the size of a small moon. Thousands of legs line the length of its underbelly.

It has not yet reached its full size.

Varr feeds on energy, particularly the life energy generated by habitable planets. It is drawn across space and time to the most vibrant worlds. It begins its feast by boring through the planet’s crust until it reaches the molten core. Varr then worms its way around the core in a spiral pattern, causing explosive chain reactions all over the world. Varr feeds on the energy generated by these shockwaves over the course of a few weeks as the planet slowly breaks apart. Once its hunger is sated, it moves on.

For eons, Varr traveled the countless systems in the Great Beyond, leaving ruin in its wake. It moved slowly, sometimes taking hundreds of years to cross into a new system as some primal sense drew it to life in the far reaches of space. It could not be reasoned with, could not be diverted, and could not be stopped. Any attacks made against it (heavy lasers, missiles, etc.) were simply absorbed as energy, adding more fuel to the great beast’s hunger.

The Rulloth devoted their lives to keeping Varr dormant. Rulloth mystics studied the creature thoroughly over thousands of years, but found no sign of any weakness. It seemed to be the perfect killing machine that existed for one thing only—to destroy worlds. A few Rulloth had even suggested that Varr might be an artificial construct designed by some ancient, malevolent servants of the Void.

If this is true, there may be other cosmic entities such as Varr prowling the darkest reaches of unknown space. . .



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